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I.

THE dubious daylight ended,
And I walked the Town alone, unminding whither bound
and why,
As from each gaunt street and gaping square a mist of
light ascended
And dispersed upon the sky.

II.

Files of evanescent faces
Passed each other without heeding, in their travail,
teen or joy,
Some in void unvisioned listlessness inwrought with
pallid traces
Of keen penury's annoy.

III.

Nebulous flames in crystal cages
Gleamed as if with discontent at city movement, murk,
and grime,
And as waiting some procession of great ghosts from
bygone ages
To exalt the ignoble time.

THE ENGLISH REVIEW

IV.

In a colonnade high-lighted,
By a thoroughfare where stern utilitarian traffic dinned,
On a red and white emblazonment of players and parts,
I sighted
The name of "Rosalind,"

V.

And her famous mates of "Arden"
Who observed no stricter customs than "the season's
difference" bade,
Who lived with running brooks for books in Nature's
wildwood garden,
And called idleness their trade. . . .

VI.

Now the poster stirred an ember
Still remaining from my ardours of some forty years
before
When the selfsame portal on an eve it thrilled me to
remember
A like announcement bore ;

VII.

And expectantly I had entered,
And had first beheld in human mould a Rosalind woo
and plead,
On whose transcendent figuring my speedy soul had
centered
As it had been she indeed. . . .

VIII.

So ; all other plans discarding
I resolved on entrance, bent on seeing what I once
had seen,
And approached the gangway of my earlier knowledge,
disregarding
The expanse of time between.

LONDON NIGHTS

IX.

“The words, sir?” cried a creature
Hovering ’twixt the shine and shade as mid the live
world and the tomb;
But the well-known numbers needed not for me a text
or teacher
To revive and re-illuminate.

X.

I was in . . . But how unfitted
Was *this* Rosalind!—a mammet quite to me, in
memories nurst,
And with chilling disappointment soon I sought the
street I had quitted
To reponder on the first.

XI.

The hag still hawked,—I met her
Just without the colonnade. “So you don’t like her,
sir?” cried she.
“Ah—I was once that Rosalind!—I acted her—none
better—
Yes—in eighteen sixty-three!

XII.

“Thus I won Orlando to me
In my once triumphant days when I had charm and
maidenhood,
Now some forty years ago.—I used to say, *Come woo
me, woo me!*”
And she struck the attitude.

XIII.

It was when I had gone there nightly;
And the voice—though raucous now—was yet the old
one.—Clear as noon
My Rosalind was here. . . . The band within,
as int’ract lightly
Beat up a merry tune.

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II. REMINISCENCES OF A DANCING MAN

I.

Who now remembers Almack's balls—
Willis's sometime named—
In those two smooth-floored upper halls
For faded ones so famed?
Where as we trod to trilling sound
The fancied phantoms stood around,
Or joined us in the maze,
Of the powdered Dears from Georgian years,
Whose dust lay in sightless sealed-up biers;
The fairest of former days.

II.

Who now remembers gay Cremorne
And all its jaunty jills,
And those wild whirling figures born
Of Jullien's grand quadrilles?
With hats on head and morning coats
There footed to his prancing notes
Our partner-girls and we;
And the gas-jets winked, and the lustres clinked,
And the platform throbbed as with arms enlinked
We moved to the minstrelsy.

III.

Who now recalls those crowded rooms
Of old yclept "The Argyle,"
Where to the deep Drum-polka's booms
We hopped in boisterous style?

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Whither have danced those damsels now !
Is Death the partner who doth moue
 Their wormy chaps and bare ?
Do their spectres spin like sparks within
The smoky halls of the Prince of Sin
 To a thunderous Jullien air ?

The Messiah of Mont' Amiata

By Edward Hutton

ONE evening in Siena, because of the noise and heat of the city, I had wandered up to the great half-forsaken church of the Servi di Maria for the sake of the silence and the wind. It was the hour before the sunset. Before me stretched the *contado*, a restless country of uptossed tawny hills as in a picture by Piero delle Francesca. And over that strange arid world, where the little cities burned like precious stones hovered Mont' Amiata that beautiful mysterious mountain not too near, not too far away, very faint in the heat, the last outpost of Siena looking towards Rome and the sea. . . .

It was there I found myself not many days later, more than three thousand feet high, wandering through the cool chestnut woods—it was August—from village to village.

The highest mountain in Tuscany, Mont' Amiata, rises on the verge of Umbria only just within the old Grand Duchy, between Siena and Orvieto, between Lago Trasimeno and the sea. Altogether out of reach of the modern world its villages, Campiglia d'Orcia, Abbadia S. Salvatore, Piancastagnaio S. Fiora and Arcidosso are still for the most part a mere huddle of mediæval dwellings in which the people—*contadini*, shepherds and miners—live a life simple and rude beyond anything to be found in England. Never without leaders who lived by expressing more or less cunningly the hatred of village for village, they have always been as they are still, immersed in religion which often seems to us the crudest superstition. Some sixty years ago, however, a man appeared in Arcidosso, the village on the western side of the mountain, who for a time united all these mountain villages and the greater part of the Maremma in a dream of a new world. This man was David Lazzaretti. I had heard vaguely of him before I went to the Mountain, but there, indeed, I heard of little else. It was not however till, on my way through the woods from village to village, I left S. Fiora and set out for Arcidosso, that I realised the amazing significance of his life.

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Here in Mont' Amiata looking across the Patrimony and over Maremma to the sea, men have never been altogether deaf to the voices of a country which beyond any other part of Tuscany is full of strangeness, beauty, and silence,—the gesture of the mountains so passionate and full of meaning, the plains so infinite and solitary. And then not far away is Latium.

It was here in this grave and solemn country that David Lazzaretti was born in Arcidosso, as it happened—we may be sure it was not without its significance for him—on All Saints' Day, 1834. He came of humble folk enough, people who were among that *bassopopolo* which is nearest the earth, and his father like his grandfather before him, followed the trade of a butcher. There in his father's house in the village of Arcidosso, he learned to read and write, and while he was still very young he began to compose poetry, in that simple place early becoming the admiration of his friends who saw still in that something wonderful and miraculous and told him so. Is it just there his later dreams of apostleship, his claim to prophecy, at last his usurpation of the name of Jesus lie hidden? Ah, who can tell? He was the new Messiah! But yesterday on the lips of a little child I heard his name: She called him *Nostro Gesu*. Who may divide the false from the true? David Lazzaretti came among the peasants and did them good. He came to his own and they received him. He laid down his life for something. Was it only for David Lazzaretti? I will not believe it. I have read his life as written by a hostile and scornful priest, I have read the scientific and obscure explanations of Signor Barzellotti, a native of Piancastagnaio, and full of information as both these writers are, they seem to me to lack humanity, for the one is content to know that David was excommunicated as Galileo was, while the other finds a mere egoist ready not only to labour for the poor, but to die willingly at the hands of ignorant men and of fools. No, as it seems to me, whether David were inspired or no, absurd or no, this at least we have no right to take from him: the honour of his sincerity. He died for the abused poor, those *contadini* who even to-day are too often the mere slaves of the *padrone*, and who in Tuscany at any rate are the salt of the earth, in whom one day we shall find the salvation of Italy.

David has had many predecessors. Without returning so far through the centuries as to come upon the Saint of Assisi and his followers, or even to Bartolommeo Carosi called Brandano, the inspired Sienese, there was in our own days too Simplicio of Sulmona, there was Oreste di Cappelle. . . .

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But David Lazzaretti was different from these. When he came to manhood he followed the trade of a *barrocciaio* and was known through all the mountains for his physical strength and his blasphemy. He himself speaks of his evil life, not, I think, with regret, but as some strangeness, some disease that had passed from him. He was a poet; from day to day he dreamed dreams; he came under the influence even in that far place of the political ideas of Young Italy; he fell in love; at twenty-two years of age he married Carolina Minucci, of Arcidosso, by whom he had a son and a daughter, witnesses of his pitiful end.

He was thirteen when he first heard those voices which later became so insistent: but then he did not heed them. The continual need to work, the physical toil imposed on him by his trade, the journeys he made round about the Mountain for long saved him from a tendency to mystic raptures that he seems to have been born with, that was certainly in his family: for though his biographers speak little of his mother, I have seen her and spoken with her, and she, too, it seemed to me, might well have been aware if she would, of those voices which David heard. However that may be, David exercised his trade till he was thirty-five years old and then suddenly in 1869 his voices, insistent for once, bade him go to Rome, which he did, taking with him the *terra gialla* of the Mountain, from a trade in which so many of the inhabitants get their living.

He had always been eager to talk of his "vocation," and in the account which he published concerning it, he speaks very definitely of "an unknown and mysterious person" who it seems had appeared to him as early as 1848 telling him as he says, what later came to pass, but enjoining him not to speak of it at all. It was the same "mysterious person" appearing to him in a dream who in 1869 bade him go to Rome and tell the Pope only, what had been revealed to him. "Awaking," he says, "I was a new man. A mysterious power had taken hold of all my senses and intellect, and yet my will and reason were free and had all their normal power."

In Rome he seems to have obtained a brief interview with Pius IX. sending him through Cardinal Panebianco a "Memoir" of all that had befallen him. But almost in the same night, a new vision came to him, in obedience to which instead of returning home, he retired to the Sabine Mountains, to "a barren, dry, obscure place under a lofty rock where was hidden the cave of Beato Amedeo." There he lived for a long time with a certain Ignazio Micus, a Prussian, who had lived for fifteen

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years in the hermitage of Santa Barbara hard by. It was with this hermit he returned to Arcidosso after a most extraordinary series of visions, in which, as he said, St. Peter marked his forehead with a mysterious sign $\mathcal{D} + \mathcal{C}$.

He came home a changed man, his very countenance seems to have gathered and retained a certain light, and he astonished all who came to him with the story of his visions. And it is said that many left him at last, their hearts changed by the spirit of God which shone in him. He read their hearts and before they opened their lips told them what they would say. And they called him the Man of Mystery. It was, however, the marks set in his forehead that most astonished the people. Signor Barzellotti a native of the Mountain, alludes to the report that David was born with two tongues and tells us that Dr. Terni of Santa Fiora examined his body after death and found in many places circles and signs burnt in with an iron while the sign $\mathcal{D} + \mathcal{C}$ on the forehead was, he assures us, "evidently tattooed."

However that may be, it was this mark which profoundly influenced those who became his followers, a great number of whom followed him to the lonely, bare height of Monte Labbro which rises some five miles to the south-east of Arcidosso. There under his direction they began to build a tower on the summit of the Mountain. In making the foundations for that stronghold it seems that David found the Grotto which to-day opens out of it under the ruins. Did he know of that secret cave already, or was it just a fortunate circumstance such as often befalls such men as David? Certainly he put that strange and almost terrible place, the work of pre-historic man, to good use. For it was there he gathered the peasants together to pray day and night. And it was over this cave where of old man just roused from the brute, hid himself to worship God, that David built his tower of great stones without mortar or cement. All without distinction of age or sex helped him, men and women, boys and girls abandoning their labour went to build this tower, which rude as it was and exposed to the winds soon in part fell down. But far from losing courage, his ideas grew within him till one day he determined to build near the tower a convent and a church, which together he thought would cost some forty thousand lire. How he got together such a sum remains a mystery. Perhaps some rich man helped him for he ever seems to have had in the background friends both powerful and wealthy, ready to assist him as far as they might. Those were the days of the great political movement which brought United Italy into being, and on both sides in that struggle

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there were those who disdained no means of influencing the minds of men on behalf of the cause they had at heart. Yet it might seem that it was rather the peasants who had believed in him and had followed him to Monte Labbro who helped him most. For at this time he founded the *Santa Lega* or *Fratellanza Cristiana*, and more important still the *Società delle famiglie Cristiane*. The latter was a lay community which possessed everything in common, the products of the common work, the means of life, and livelihood. The people began by putting together their fields, their oxen and their crops, for a great number of them were small *contadini possidenti* and like all their class, the most conservative force in Italy, profoundly hostile to any novelty social or political. But David had come at a time when the ground was ready for him. He was not without a sort of culture and he knew how to treat the people simply; his great strength lay perhaps in the fact that his culture, such as it was, was not too much higher than, was not out of touch with, the minds of the peasants around him. He was able to understand and to enter into their thoughts and desires and by his genius to give them life and reality. Certainly his visions and raptures, the voices he heard, the gift of prophecy were no new things. The Maremmesi knew them well, for they are still even to-day, full of occult notions, ideas tinged with the far away dim thoughts of the Etruscans; they can receive and appreciate hints as it were, from Nature, of the past, of the future and find in the shapes of rocks or of trees, in the flight of a bird, the aspect of the sky, marvellous revelations, through which they often touch reality, finding perhaps in one appearance the image of that other which we have chosen how arbitrarily to regard as the only matter of fact. Even the clergy helped and liked him, some strange profound charm lay in the awakened soul of the sometime *barracciao* who had as it were by means of the poetry of his nature found salvation. And since his strength seems then to have lain in his temperament and in the limitations of his intelligence, it does not surprise us to find that that Society of Christian Families, which had built the convent and church, was a failure, that before long it was grievously in debt and that many were angered and disgusted. David's love knew no bounds. He received every one into that fold and left the practical management of affairs in the hands of others less honest it may be than himself; he was absorbed in his thoughts about God.

At a certain hour in the evening Barzellotti tells us, after the Rosary had been said, the women, of whom there were many at the Tower, went to bed, the men, however, remained with

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David, who either read or spoke to them. At midnight they went into the church or into the cave under the Tower and said Matins and other prayers, then followed a reading—and meditation, till four o'clock when they went to work. "Often," says one who was present, "often the day broke and it seemed as though not an hour had passed, though we had stood all night to hear him, hardly breathing: and in the morning we went down the hill-side by different ways to work again as fresh as though we had slept all night long."

David himself seems to have worked with his people till they protested and his friends begged that they might do his share of the field work. He consented at last, but for one day's work only when one hundred and eighty men and women wanted to help him. And on that occasion, we find that David wrote one of his best published speeches. He called himself a "mysterious being" and said that one day the mystery that was in him and also in themselves would be revealed clearly to all, but that meanwhile it was necessary that each should feel in the depths of his heart a new birth, a "mysterious renewing." "With all my heart," he continued, "I long to hear every Italian tongue say, *Evviva Iddio, Evviva Cristo, Evviva Maria, Evviva la Chiesa Romana*. There are those who hear me who will take me for a partisan of the priests. Ah, it is not so. If you should think so you are mistaken. In truth I am a partisan of none, but of God only. I speak only what He whispers, I am the mouthpiece of God." He goes on to tell of his submission to God's will, of his love for Mont' Amiata and for his friends. Later he breaks out suddenly with fierce invectives against the Protestants and enters into theological subtleties in which he loses himself. And for this Barzellotti thinks him the mouthpiece of some over-zealous priest.

Yet while the Society lasted it was not without a certain usefulness, its high aspirations were not altogether mere sunshine. It aimed not only at the improvement of agriculture but at the instruction of the members and their children, and it maintained a schoolmaster and a schoolmistress, in Monte Labbro for several years, indeed both were in the procession on the day of David's death. It failed, and an action at law followed: David was sentenced to two years imprisonment being accused and convicted of dishonesty; and though he appealed to the Court of Perugia and was acquitted, he seems to have thought it better to leave the mountain for a time. He had long declared to his disciples that he would be called by God to go to distant lands, for there, said he, the accomplishment of

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his "mission" would be prepared. Indeed the constant expectation of his departure strengthened his authority. A short absence in 1870 which he spent on the island of Monte Cristo where again he suffered many visions had certainly encouraged him in the belief that an occasional absence was not unfriendly to his power. On the night of his departure, January 5, 1870, he had gathered his most trusted followers together in the Hermitage on Monte Labbro and had there eaten with them. He sat in their midst clad in a purple robe, and to each he gave a portion of bread, of lamb, and of wine. It was a strange supper, even the prophecy touching the treachery of some of his disciples was not wanting and he told them of the great things that would befall in Arcidosso. "Return to the bosom of your families bearing with you peace and salvation; set example of virtue not only to those of your own home, but to all who seek you in order to hear of me. Consider yourselves fortunate and happy if you are despised by those who do not love virtue. Be content and tranquil if you are in trouble or in poverty. Think not of the world, but of the purity of the soul. Prize suffering; keep aloof from idleness all the days and offer up your labour to God and He in Heaven will bless you."

His absence was short. At the news of his return thousands hastened to meet him from all parts of the Mountain. Anxious crowds thronged the bare sides of Monte Labbro. And as he was seen at last on horseback climbing through the low scrub of the forest, a great murmur of joy that at last became a cry, rose from the people. And he came into their midst greeting them all by name, and was lifted from his horse by a hundred arms, on to the ground. He knelt down and gave thanks to God. Then turning to the people he began to speak, "God sees us, God judges us, God condemns us," he announced. He spoke slowly, syllable by syllable, almost chanting his words. He broke almost into song:

Chi son i Re del Mondo ?
Non son caduca polvere ?
O regi inorridite !
Presta è la man che fulmina
A subissare al suol
Le vostre inique cattedre
Di falsi adulator. . . .
Un solo sarà il Re.

That was in the year of the taking of Rome, who knows what echoes of tremendous events about to befall Europe from the cunning power of Bismarck may be found in David's speeches?

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His love for France was scarcely less than his love for Italy. But it is of the latter he is thinking when he prophesies that the future liberator of the world shall be an Italian who will unite himself to the Church, yielding kingly authority and dignity to the Pope and governing with him. Just there we seem to have the dream of a Catholic and a patriot, his vision, alas! so unreal of Victor Emmanuel.

It is a greater and more splendid thing he sees when he tells us of the future union of all the Latin peoples with Greece. And may there not have been some profound instinct expressed in the vision in which the "Friar" says to him, "Let me go to Latium the land of great men." Ah, even the peasants on the soil cannot forget the greatness of Rome.

But it was in 1873 after the close of the Prussian War, after the fall of Rome, that David set out for France. Not for long, for in a few months he was back again, only to return again in 1875 to Lyons where he seems to have remained with his family till 1876. What caused him to leave Italy so often? Was he truly called of God as he said, or were those accusations brought against him by those who thought him personally responsible for their losses in the failure of the Società, the real cause of his continual journeying to and fro? In France it is true he found friends and benefactors both among the clergy and the laity who encouraged him in his "Apostolate." Among others a certain Leon du Vachat who is said by Barzellotti to have lent him eight thousand francs, and to have kept both him and his family in his house, paying their expenses at Lyons and elsewhere. And it is to him we owe perhaps the publication of David's writings.

At the end of 1876 when he returned to Monte Labbro, which from this time he called Monte Labaro, the Holy Ensign, where he was to build that New Sion which would be one of the Seven Eternal Cities to rise in Mont' Amiata, a certain change may be discerned in his doctrine. At first some of the clergy of Arcidosso as I have said supported him, partly perhaps on account of his miraculous conversion which as they thought was bound to edify true believers. Had not the Bishop of Montalcino consecrated the church in Monte Labbro; while it was served by two ex-frati of the order of S. Philip Neri who were David's disciples? It was the publication of his book "My striving with God" (*La Mia Lotta con Dio*) that first seems to have roused ecclesiastical suspicion against him. Perceiving this and altogether disturbed by it, in November 1877 he went to Rome and as many have found before and since he got no hearing. Indeed the one thing that really seems to

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frighten and paralyse the government of the Church is a book. It was the same in the sixteenth century as to-day ; the invention of printing is the one real blow the world has been able to deal at Catholicism. While David was in Rome, the Bishops of Montalcino and Montefiascone suspended the two ex-frati, Padre Polverini and Padre Imperuzzi, *a divinis* ; and the chapel of Monte Labbro was laid under an interdict. It was the eve of the death of Pius IX. and of Victor Emmanuel and with these events apparently of so much importance for Italy, David announced that the Era of the Law of Right, the Reign of the Holy Spirit had begun. He made submission to Leo XIII. and persuaded Padre Imperuzzi to do the same, Padre Polverini, however, refused to give in. Again he went to France and even to London and on his return we may again perceive an advance in his teaching. It is no longer *Evviva la Chiesa Romana*, he cries, but *Viva la Repubblica, ch'è il Regno di Dio*, writing indeed three hymns for that State, established certainly in his heart, in all noble hearts, perhaps, to which he had won so hardly. Was there something not quite sane in his dreams ? It is difficult to say ; yet in his last work the "*Simbolo della Nuova Riforma dello Spirito Santo in 24 Articoli*" something exaggerated, something like a cry of despair, as though he already saw himself forced to give in and to fulfil the dreams of the peasantry, is heard. The last article declares : "We conclude finally that our Master David Lazzaretti the anointed of the Lord, judged and condemned by the Roman Curia is actually Christ the Leader and Judge in the true and lively figure of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ into the world." . . . Thus, as he himself said began the fifth act of his Tragedy.

David returned to Italy for the last time in June 1878. On August 14, the vigil of the Assumption—Our Lady of the Harvest—an enormous crowd of his followers gathered on Monte Labbro to descend with him on the next day as he had promised them into Arcidosso, into that new kingdom where, so he had seemed to say, they would have a larger share of the crops and harvests than their masters themselves. That night there were no bonfires on the Mountain or in the Maremma. Madonna was forgotten, the Kingdom was at hand. The authorities, realising too late that there might well be danger in the excitement and greed of such a multitude, hastily sent for Carabinieri, increasing the force in Arcidosso from the usual two or three to eight or nine. Yet it was chiefly the priests who were his enemies ; the Prefect of Grosseto was his friend, forced at last to betray him.

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On the night of the vigil David walked alone on Monte Labbro and coming at length to the crowd, so great that all the side of the Mountain seemed to be alive with men and women and children, he bade them say the Rosary with him. Then he invited them into the Church. There in profound silence with every eye fixed on him, he spoke at last of his descent from the Mountain. Later he bade them return to their homes, and going himself into the hermitage, followed by his disciples, he made them put on the symbolic dresses of his company which he had brought from Turin. Then he saw before him the mysterious people of his dreams, the personages of his visions, the legions he had awaited in his heart. And with them he returned to the Church.

It was thus in procession a few days later in the dawn of August 18, after a night spent in prayer and fasting, that they set out for Arcidosso. In that strange company were seven legionary Princes chosen to command the *Milizie Crocifere dello Spirito Santo*. They were clothed like the "seven great personages" that David had seen in his vision in the Sabine hills. They wore over a fantastic close fitting dress of grey or red a blue mantle lined with scarlet. And David himself was dressed as they were save that instead of a scarlet hat with hanging point and a yellow stripe he wore a blue head-dress with three tall drooping feathers one of green, one of yellow one of blue and before a silver dove with an olive branch in its beak. Then followed the twelve Apostles and the Disciples, and the former wore blue mantles, but the latter red. Then came the Hermit Priests who represented a new religious congregation, they too wore blue mantles and before them was carried a golden crozier. The women were not less numerous nor less fantastically clothed. First came the Matrons and Sisters of Charity, the former in red mantles, the latter in blue; then followed the Maidens and after them the "Daughters of the Canticles" all robed in white with wreaths of roses on their heads: and among them was Bianchina, David's little daughter. High above the heads of this procession which was headed by the children, numerous flags were seen, the white and blue banner of Our Lady of Victory borne by the Maidens, the white Banners of Christ, the golden ensign of the Levites, the scarlet of the Soldiers of the Holy Militia, the three flags of the Italian, French, and Spanish legions. Thus they set out in the dawn singing David's hymns.

Thrice, Barzellotti tells us they wound round the Mountain while the sun rose slowly over that strange barren world, glistening on the shouting waters of the little Fiora, shining at last on

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the far-away sea. Some doubtless on the way turned over and over in their minds those words in the "Book of the Heavenly Flowers" where the Prophet describes the descent of the New Moses from the Mountain. "This," he had said pointing to his red mantle, "This is a token of blood, the blood of the new Abel which before long will be shed and mingled with That which is in the Chalice."

The first part of the procession had already begun to move when a messenger came in panting from Arcidosso. It was David's brother Pasquale; he bade him "for heaven's sake not to come down for in the valley were those who were waiting to shoot him and his flock."

Was it too late to return? Did he even wish to return? Who knows? At least he answered in a clear and ringing voice so that all might hear, that he wished harm to no one, that he feared nothing. Then in God's name he bade them follow him doubting nothing for not a hair of their heads would be touched. "The victim," said he, "will be myself alone." And he went on his way. The day was calm and full of the still heat of summer. David moved hither and thither giving his orders with vigorous gestures as he was used to do. Twice when others joined the procession on the way, he addressed them, asking them, if they desired the Republic. And when from thousands of throats came the eager and passionate "Si," he continued: "The Republic begins to-day in the world. It will not be the republic of 1848, it will be the Kingdom of God, the Law of Right which has succeeded to the Law of Favour." (*La legge del Diritto succeduta a quella di Grazia.*)

Then the women, and the maidens began to sing one of David's hymns. Barzellotti has given us some of the lines:

*E quando arrivato
Saro all'agonia
Ti prego, O Maria
Soccorrimi Tu.
Raccogli quest' alma
Nel santo tuo velo
Scortandola in cielo
Unita con Te.*

It was half-past nine when they approached Arcidosso. There a great crowd awaited them, but the murmur of the voices died away as they approached. Out of the crowd which indeed blocked the road, the *Delegato di Pubblica Sicurezza*, De Luca and the Syndic, followed by nine or ten Carabinieri advanced a little to meet them. David left his place in the procession, passed the children who headed it and went alone to meet the

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Delegato who had stopped in the middle of the road and had begun to read the three intimations ordered by the law, calling on David to return. When he had done there was a great silence. Then David was heard to reply, "I go forward in the name of the Law of Right and of Christ the Judge." And he pointed to an image of Christ Crucified, on a banner floating above his head. The Delegato answered nothing. Presently David spoke again. "If it is peace that you desire, I bring it you, if Pity here it is, if Blood lo! I am here." And he opened his arms and waited in silence.

A thrill of excitement, expectation and desire ran through the multitude, the Delegato it is said, would have spoken with him, and indeed did so, David replied with a wave of his arm, as was his way. De Luca brandished his gun. They stood alone in the midst of the way between the two crowds who looked on in silence. Suddenly David was seen to turn and eagerly wave to his followers, uttering a few words drowned in the enormous cry that rose on all sides, "*Viva, Evviva la Repubblica*": and heavy stones began to fall on the Delegato and the Carabinieri. Then a man's voice rose suddenly above the shouting; "Fire" he cried, and in a moment the rifles answered, not once nor twice but many times, and David and the Delegato and the Carabinieri were lost in the cloud of smoke.

As the smoke drifted away in the hot air David was seen to be lying in the road, motionless, one or two of his disciples bending over him. The multitude apparently watched what had happened without much disquietude. Had not the Prophet himself said that no shot could kill him? So when his wife and children had come up weeping to find him wounded and bleeding he was carried away on a ladder along the road leading to Santa Fiora, the procession following in order singing his hymns. They had no thought of vengeance, their faith in God and His Prophet was such that they thought all had befallen to try their faith; and even at the worst, if David were dead, would he not rise again on the Third Day?

The people of Arcidosso saw them depart with relief, they had feared an attack on their trumpery shops and wretched homes, which even to a beggar might seem indeed to offer but little as loot.

So the procession passed along the hot white road toward Bagnorea. One of the "Spiritual Princes," a tall, strong man with long, white hair and beard explained matters as they went. The Prophet had said: "I shall be the victim," what could this mean but that he would be wounded even to death, that

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he would rise again? So he comforted them. But David gave no sign of life only now and then in his agony a groan escaped him.

It was past mid-day when they reached Bagnorea. The dying man was laid on a bed in a little house half-hidden in the chestnuts near the road. Around him knelt his disciples, waiting for him to revive, but he had only a few hours to live, for the three bullets that had struck him had entered the brain.

"I found him," said one of the witnesses at the trial, which followed, "I found him lying on a bed while near him knelt his young daughter and his son Turpino. The girl was still dressed in white with a long veil and a chaplet of roses on her head. Turpino too was in the dress of the Lazzarettisti. They were weeping. Near the dying man was Dr. Terni, of Santa Fiora, who told me that David had only a few minutes to live. On one side was his wife sobbing. I remember I said something to her to try to comfort her, but she answered weeping: 'He is dying for the Glory of God.'"

It was dawn when he breathed his last, surrounded by his followers, who did not believe that he was dead till they had seen him with their own eyes. Nor then were they overcome with grief. They waited praying and singing hymns thinking indeed of his resurrection! And no one would have touched his body but that an order came from the authorities that obliged them to bury him in the cemetery of Santa Fiora.

There he indeed waits the resurrection; nor is there need of any stone or word to mark his grave; for, each year at Spring time, flowers red as blood newly shed blossom in that place, springing as they say from the heart of the Prophet. These the Lazzarettisti kneeling gather, and, binding them in bunches, place them beside their beds under the blessed image of Madonna, as who should say: He saved others, himself he could not save.

The Matador of the Five Towns

By Arnold Bennett

I.

MRS. BRINDLEY looked across the lunch-table at her husband with glinting, eager eyes, which showed that there was something unusual in the brain behind them.

"Bob," she said, factitiously calm. "You don't know what I've just remembered!"

"Well?" said he.

"It's only grandma's birthday to-day!"

My friend Robert Brindley, the architect, struck the table with a violent fist, making his little boys blink, and then he said quietly:

"*The deuce!*"

I gathered that grandmamma's birthday had been forgotten and that it was not a festival that could be neglected with impunity. Both Mr. and Mrs. Brindley had evidently a humorous appreciation of crises, contretemps, and those collisions of circumstance which are usually called "junctures" for short. I could have imagined either of them saying to the other: "Here's a funny thing! The house is on fire!" And then yielding to laughter as they ran for buckets. Mrs. Brindley, in particular, laughed now; she gazed at the table-cloth and laughed almost silently to herself; though it appeared that their joint forgetfulness might result in temporary estrangement from a venerable ancestor who was also, birthdays being duly observed, a continual fount of rich presents in specie.

Robert Brindley drew a time-table from his breast-pocket with the rapid gesture of habit. All men of business in the Five Towns seem to carry that time-table in their breast-pockets. Then he examined his watch carefully.

"You'll have time to dress up your progeny and catch the 2.5. It makes the connection at Knype for Axe."

The two little boys, aged perhaps four and six, who had been ladling the messy contents of specially deep plates on to their

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bibs, dropped their spoons and began to babble about gray-granny, and one of them insisted several times that he must wear his new gaiters.

"Yes," said Mrs. Brindley to her husband, after reflection. "And a fine old crowd there'll be in the train—with this football match!"

"Can't be helped! . . . Now you kids, hook it upstairs to nurse."

"And what about you?" asked Mrs. Brindley.

"You must tell the old lady I'm kept by business."

"I told her that last year, and you know what happened."

"Well," said Brindley. "Here Loring's just come. You don't expect me to leave him, do you? Or have you had the beautiful idea of taking him over to Axe to pass a pleasant Saturday afternoon with your esteemed grandmother?"

"No," said Mrs. Brindley. "Hardly that!"

"Well, then?"

The boys, having first revolved on their axes, slid down from their high chairs as though from horses.

"Look here," I said, "You mustn't mind me. I shall be all right."

"Ha-ha!" shouted Brindley. "I seem to see you turned loose alone in this amusing town on a winter afternoon. I seem to see you!"

"I could stop in and read," I said, eyeing the multitudinous books on every wall of the dining-room. The house was dadoed throughout with books.

"Rot!" said Brindley.

This was only my third visit to his home and to the Five Towns, but he and I had already become curiously intimate. My first two visits had been occasioned by official pilgrimages as a British Museum expert in ceramics. The third was for a purely friendly week-end, and had no pretext. The fact is, I was drawn to the astonishing district and its astonishing inhabitants. The Five Towns, to me, was like the East to those who have smelt the East: it "called."

"I'll tell you what we *could* do," said Mrs. Brindley. "We could put him on to Dr. Stirling."

"So we could!" Brindley agreed. "Wife, this is one of your bright, intelligent days. We'll put you on to the doctor, Loring. I'll impress on him that he must keep you constantly amused till I get back, which I fear it won't be early. This is what we call manners, you know,—to invite a fellow creature to travel a hundred and fifty miles to spend two days here,

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and then to turn him out before he's been in the house an hour. It's *us*, that is! But the truth of the matter is, the birthday business might be a bit serious. It might easily cost me fifty quid and no end of diplomacy. If you were a married man you'd know that the ten plagues of Egypt are simply nothing in comparison with your wife's relations. And she's over eighty, the old lady."

"I'll give you ten plagues of Egypt!" Mrs. Brindley menaced her spouse, as she wafted the boys from the room. "Mr. Loring, do take some more of that cheese if you fancy it." She vanished.

Within ten minutes Brindley was conducting me to the doctor's, whose house was on the way to the station. In its spacious porch, he explained the circumstances in six words, depositing me like a parcel. The doctor, who had once by mysterious medicaments saved my frail organism from the consequences of one of Brindley's Falstaffian "nights," hospitably protested his readiness to sacrifice patients to my pleasure.

"It'll be a chance for MacIlroy," said he.

"Who's MacIlroy?" I asked.

"MacIlroy is another Scotchman," growled Brindley. "Extraordinary how they stick together! When he wanted an assistant, do you suppose he looked about for some one in the district, some one who understood us and loved us and could take a hand at bridge? Not he! Off he goes to Cupar, or somewhere, and comes back with another stage Scotchman, named MacIlroy. Now listen here, Doc! A charge to keep you have, and mind you keep it, or I'll never pay your confounded bill. We'll knock on the window to-night as we come back. In the meantime you can show Loring your etchings, and pray for me." And to me: "Here's a latchkey." With no further ceremony, he hurried away to join his wife and children at Bleakridge Station. In such singular manner was I transferred forcibly from host to host.

II.

The doctor and I resembled each other in this: that there was no offensive affability about either of us. Though abounding in good nature, we could not become intimate by a sudden act of volition. Our conversation was difficult, unnatural, and by gusts falsely familiar. He displayed to me his bachelor house, his etchings, a few specimens of modern *rouge flambé* ware made at Knype, his whisky, his celebrated prize-winning fox-terrier Titus, the largest collection of books in the Five Towns, and photographs of Marischal College, Aberdeen. Then

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we fell flat, socially prone. Sitting in his study, with Titus between us on the hearthrug, we knew no more what to say or do. I regretted that Brindley's wife's grandmother should have been born on a fifteenth of February. Brindley was a vivacious talker, he could be trusted to talk. I, too, am a good talker—with another good talker. With a bad talker I am just a little worse than he is. The doctor said abruptly after a nerve-trying silence that he had forgotten a most important call at Hanbridge, and would I care to go with him in the car? I was and still am convinced that he was simply inventing. He wanted to break the sinister spell by getting out of the house, and he had not the face to suggest a sortie into the streets of the Five Towns as a promenade of pleasure.

So we went forth, splashing warily through the rich mud and the dank mist of Trafalgar Road, past all those strange little Indian-red houses, and ragged empty spaces, and poster-boards, and rounded kilns, and high smoking chimneys, up hill, down hill, and up hill again, encountering and overtaking many electric trams that dipped and rose like ships at sea, into Crown Square, the centre of Hanbridge, the metropolis of the Five Towns. And while the doctor paid his mysterious call, I stared around me at the large shops and the banks and the gilded hotels. Down the radiating street-vistas I could make out the façades of halls, theatres, chapels. Trams rumbled continually in and out of the square. They seemed to enter casually, to hesitate a few moments as if at a loss, and then to decide with a nonchalant clang of bells that they might as well go off somewhere else in search of something more interesting. They were rather like human beings who are condemned to live for ever in a place of which they are sick beyond the expressiveness of words.

And indeed the influence of Crown Square, with its large effects of terra cotta, plate glass, and gold letters, all under a heavy skyscape of drab smoke, was depressing. A few very seedy men (sharply contrasting with the fine delicacy of costly things behind plate-glass) stood doggedly here and there in the mud, immobilised by the gloomy enchantment of the Square. Two of them turned to look at Stirling's motor-car and me. They gazed fixedly for a long time, and then one said, only his lips moving :

“Has Tommy stood thee that there quart o' beer as he promised thee?”

No reply, no response of any sort, for a further long period! Then the other said, with grim resignation :

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“ Ay ! ”

The conversation ceased, having made a little oasis in the dismal desert of their silent scrutiny of the car. Except for an occasional stamp of the foot they never moved. They just doggedly and indifferently stood, blown upon by all the nipping draughts of the square, and as it might be sinking deeper and deeper into its dejection. As for me, instead of desolating, the harsh disconsolateness of the scene seemed to uplift me ; I savoured it with joy, as one savours the melancholy of a tragic work of art.

“ We might go down to the *Signal* offices, and worry Buchanan a bit,” said the doctor cheerfully when he came back to the car. This was the second of his inspirations.

Buchanan, of whom I had heard, was another Scotchman and the editor of the sole daily organ of the Five Towns, an evening newspaper cried all day in the streets and read by the entire population. Its green sheet appeared to be a permanent waving feature of the main thoroughfares. The offices lay round a corner close by, and as we drew up in front of them a crowd of tattered urchins interrupted their diversions in the sodden road to celebrate our glorious arrival by unanimously yelling at the top of their strident and hoarse voices :

“ Hooray ! Hoo—bl—dy—ray ! ”

Abashed, I followed my doctor into the shelter of the building, a new edifice, capacious and considerable, but horribly faced with terra cotta, and quite unimposing, lacking in the spectacular effect ; like nearly everything in the Five Towns, carelessly and scornfully ugly ! The mean, swinging double-doors returned to the assault when you pushed them, and hit you viciously. In a dark, countered room marked “ Enquiries ” there was nobody.

“ Hi, there ! ” called the doctor.

A head appeared at a door.

“ Mr. Buchanan upstairs ? ”

“ Yes,” snapped the head, and disappeared.

Up a dark staircase we went, and at the summit were half flung back again by another self-acting door.

In the room to which we next came an old man and a youngish one were bent over a large, littered table, scribbling on and arranging pieces of grey tissue paper and telegrams. Behind the old man stood a boy. Neither of them looked up.

“ Mr. Buchanan in his——” the doctor began to question.
“ Oh ! There you are ! ”

The editor was standing in hat and muffler at the window, gazing out. His age was about that of the doctor, forty or so ;

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and like the doctor he was rather stout and clean-shaven. Their Scotch accents mingled in greeting, the doctor's being the more marked. Buchanan shook my hand with a certain courtliness, indicating that he was well accustomed to receive strangers. As an expert in small talk, however, he shone no brighter than his visitors, and the three of us stood there by the window awkwardly, in the heaped disorder of the room, while the other two men scratched and fidgeted with bits of paper at the soiled table.

Suddenly and savagely the old man turned on the boy:

"What the hades are you waiting there for?"

"I thought there was something else, sir."

"Sling your hook."

Buchanan winked at Stirling and me as the boy slouched off and the old man blandly resumed his writing.

"Perhaps you'd like to look over the place?" Buchanan suggested politely to me. "I'll come with you. It's all I'm fit for to-day. . . . 'Flu!" He glanced at Stirling, and yawned.

"Ye ought to be in bed," said Stirling.

"Yes. I know. I've known it for twelve years. I shall go to bed as soon as I get a bit of time to myself. Well, will you come? The half-time results are beginning to come in."

A telephone-bell rang impatiently.

"You might just see what that is, boss," said the old man without looking up.

Buchanan went to the telephone, and replied into it: "Yes? What? Oh! Myatt? Yes, he's playing. . . . Of course I'm sure! Good-bye." He turned to the old man: "It's another of 'em wanting to know if Myatt is playing. Birmingham, this time."

"Ah!" exclaimed the old man, still writing.

"It's because of the betting," Buchanan glanced at me. "The odds are on Knype now,—three to two."

"If Myatt is playing, Knype have got me to thank for it," said the doctor, surprisingly.

"You?"

"Me! He fetched me to his wife this morning. She's nearing her confinement. False alarm! I guaranteed him at least another twelve hours."

"Oh! So that's it, is it?" Buchanan murmured.

Both the sub-editors raised their heads.

"That's it," said the doctor.

"Some people were saying he'd quarrelled with the trainer

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again, and was shamming," said Buchanan. "But I didn't believe that. There's no hanky-panky about Jos Myatt, anyhow."

I learnt in answer to my questions that a great and terrible football match was at that moment in progress at Knype, a couple of miles away, between the Knype Club and the Manchester Rovers. It was conveyed to me that the importance of this match was almost national, and that the entire district was practically holding its breath till the result should be known. The half-time result was one goal each.

"If Knype lose," said Buchanan explanatorily, "they'll find themselves pushed out of the First League at the end of the season. That's a cert. . . one of the oldest clubs in England ! Semi-finalists for the English Cup in '78."

"'79" corrected the elder sub-editor.

I gathered that the crisis was grave.

"And Myatt's the captain, I suppose ?" said I.

"No. But he's the finest full-back in the League."

I then had a vision of Myatt as a great man. By an effort of the imagination I perceived that the equivalent of the fate of nations depended upon him. I recollected, now, large yellow posters on the hoardings we had passed, with the names of Knype and of Manchester Rovers in letters a foot high and the legend "League match at Knype" over all. It seemed to me that the heroic name of Jos Myatt, if truly he were the finest full-back in the League, if truly his presence or absence affected the betting as far off as Birmingham, ought also to have been on the posters, together with possibly his portrait. I saw Jos Myatt as a matador, with a long ribbon of scarlet necktie down his breast, and embroidered trousers.

"Why !" said Buchanan, "if Knype drop into the Second Division, they'll never pay another dividend ! It'll be all up with first class football in the Five Towns !"

The interests involved seemed to grow more complicated. And here I had been in the district nearly four hours without having guessed that the district was quivering in the tense excitement of gigantic issues ! And here was this Scotch doctor, at whose word the great Myatt would have declined to play, never saying a syllable about the affair, until a chance remark from Buchanan loosened his tongue. But all doctors are strangely secretive. Secretiveness is one of their chief private pleasures.

"Come and see the pigeons, eh ?" said Buchanan.

"Pigeons !" I repeated.

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"We give the results of over a hundred matches in our Football Edition," said Buchanan, and added: "not counting Rugby."

As we left the room two boys dodged round us into it, bearing telegrams.

In a moment we were, in the most astonishing manner, on a leaden roof of the *Signal* offices. High factory chimneys rose over the horizon of slates on every side, blowing thick smoke into the general murk of the afternoon sky, and crossing the western crimson with long pennons of black. And out of the murk there came from afar a blue-and-white pigeon which circled largely several times over the offices of the *Signal*. At length it descended, and I could hear the whirr of its strong wings. The wings ceased to beat and the pigeon slanted downwards in a curve, its head lower than its wide tail. Then the little head gradually rose and the tail fell; the curve had changed, the pace slackened; the pigeon was calculating with all its brain; eyes, wings, tail and feet were being co-ordinated to the resolution of an intricate mechanical problem. The pinkish claws seemed to grope—and after an instant of hesitation, the thing was done, the problem solved; the pigeon, with delicious gracefulness, had established equilibrium on the ridge of a pigeon-cote, and folded its wings, and was peering about with strange motions of its extremely movable head. Presently it flew down to the leads, waddled to and fro with the ungainly gestures of a fat woman of sixty, and disappeared into the cote. At the same moment the boy who had been dismissed from the sub-editor's room ran forward and entered the cote by a wire-screened door.

"Handy things, pigeons!" said the doctor as we approached to examine the cote. Fifty or sixty pigeons were cooing and strutting in it. There was a protest of wings as the boy seized the last arriving messenger.

"Give it here!" Buchanan ordered.

The boy handed over a thin tube of paper which he had unfastened from the bird's leg. Buchanan unrolled it and showed it to me. I read: "Midland Federation. Axe United, Macclesfield Town. Match abandoned after half-hour's play owing to fog. Three forty-five."

"Three forty-five," said Buchanan, looking at his watch. "He's done the ten miles in half an hour, roughly. Not bad. First time we tried pigeons from as far off as Axe. Here boy!" And he restored the paper to the boy, who gave it to another boy, who departed with it.

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“Man,” said the doctor, eyeing Buchanan. “Ye’d no business out here. Ye’re not precisely a pigeon.”

Down we went, one after another, by the ladder, and now we fell into the composing-room, where Buchanan said he felt warmer. An immense, dirty, white-washed apartment crowded with linotypes and other machines, in front of which sat men in white aprons, tapping, tapping,—gazing at documents pinned at the level of their eyes,—and tapping, tapping. A kind of cavernous retreat in which monstrous iron growths rose out of the floor and were met half way by electric flowers that had their roots in the ceiling! In this jungle there was scarcely room for us to walk. Buchanan explained the linotypes to me. I watched, as though romantically dreaming, the flashing descent of letter after letter, a rain of letters into the belly of the machine; then, going round to the back, I watched the same letters rising again in a close, slow procession, and sorting themselves by themselves at the top in readiness to answer again to the tapping, tapping of a man in a once-white apron. And while I was watching all that, I could somehow, by a faculty which we have, at the same time see pigeons far overhead, arriving and arriving out of the murk from beyond the verge of chimneys.

“Ingenious, isn’t it?” said Stirling.

But I imagine that he had not the faculty by which to see the pigeons.

A reverend, bearded, spectacled man, with his shirt-sleeves rolled up and an apron stretched over his hemispherical paunch, strolled slowly along an alley, glancing at a galley-proof with an ingenuous air just as if he had never seen a galley-proof before.

“It’s a stick more than a column already,” said he confidentially, offering the long paper, and then gravely looking at Buchanan, with head bent forward, not through his spectacles but over them.

The editor negligently accepted the proof, and I read a series of titles: “*Knype v. Manchester Rovers. Record Gate. Fifteen thousand spectators. Two goals in twelve minutes. Myatt in form. Special Report.*”

Buchanan gave the slip back without a word.

“There you are!” said he to me, as another compositor near us attached a piece of tissue paper to his machine. It was the very paper that I had seen come out of the sky, but its contents had been enlarged and amended by the sub-editorial pen. The man began tapping, tapping, and the letters began to flash downwards on their way to tell a quarter of a million people that *Axe v. Macclesfield* had been stopped by fog.

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“ I suppose that Knype match is over by now ? ” I said.

“ Oh, no ! ” said Buchanan. “ The second half has scarcely begun.”

“ Like to go ? ” Stirling asked.

“ Well,” I said, feeling adventurous, “ it’s a notion, isn’t it ? ”

“ You can run Mr. Loring down there in five or six minutes,” said Buchanan. “ And he’s probably never seen anything like it before. You might call here as you come home, and see the paper on the machines.”

III.

We went on the Grand Stand, which was packed with men whose eyes were fixed, with an unconscious but intense effort, on a common object. Among the men were a few women in furs and wraps, equally absorbed. Nobody took any notice of us as we insinuated our way up a rickety flight of wooden stairs, but when by misadventure we grazed a human being the elbow of that being shoved itself automatically and fiercely outwards, to repel. I had an impression of hats, caps, and woolly overcoats stretched in long parallel lines, and of grimy raw planks everywhere presenting possibly dangerous splinters, save where use had worn them into smooth shininess. Then gradually I became aware of the vast field, which was more brown than green. Around the field was a wide border of infinitesimal hats and pale faces, rising in tiers, and beyond this border fences, hoardings, chimneys, furnaces, gasometers, telegraph-poles, houses, and dead trees. And here and there, perched in strange perilous places, even high up towards the sombre sky, were more human beings clinging. On the field itself, at one end of it, were a scattered handful of doll-like figures, motionless ; some had white bodies, others red ; and three were in black ; all were so small and so far off that they seemed to be mere unimportant casual incidents in whatever recondite affair it was that was proceeding. Then a whistle shrieked, and all these figures began simultaneously to move, and then I saw a ball in the air. An obscure, uneasy murmuring rose from the immense multitude like an invisible but audible vapour. The next instant the vapour had condensed into a sudden shout. Now I saw the ball rolling solitary in the middle of the field, and a single red doll racing towards it ; at one end was a confused group of red and white, and at the other two white dolls, rather lonely in the expanse. The single red doll overtook the ball and scudded along

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with it at his twinkling toes. A great voice behind me bellowed with an incredible volume of sound :

“ Now Jos ! ”

And another voice, further away, bellowed :

“ Now Jos ! ”

And still more distantly the grim warning shot forth from the crowd :

“ Now Jos ! Now Jos ! ”

The nearer of the white dolls, as the red one approached, sprang forward. I could see a leg. And the ball was flying back in a magnificent curve into the skies ; it passed out of my sight, and then I heard a bump on the slates of the roof of the grand stand, and it fell among the crowd in the stand-enclosure. But almost before the flight of the ball had commenced, a terrific roar of relief had rolled formidably round the field, and out of that roar, like rockets out of thick smoke, burst acutely ecstatic cries of adoration :

“ Bravo Jos ! ”

“ Good old Jos ! ”

The leg had evidently been Jos's leg. The nearer of these two white dolls must be Jos, darling of fifteen thousand frenzied people.

Stirling punched a neighbour in the side to attract his attention.

“ What's the score ? ” he demanded of the neighbour, who scowled and then grinned.

“ Two—one—agen uz ! ” The other growled. “ It'll take our b—s all their time to draw. They're playing a man short.”

“ Accident ? ”

“ No ! Referee ordered him off for rough play.”

Several spectators began to explain, passionately, furiously, that the referee's action was utterly bereft of common sense and justice ; and I gathered that a less gentlemanly crowd would undoubtedly have lynched the referee. The explanations died down, and everybody except me resumed his fierce watch on the field.

I was recalled from the exercise of a vague curiosity upon the set, anxious faces around me by a crashing, whooping cheer which in volume and sincerity of joy surpassed all noises in my experience. This massive cheer reverberated round the field like the echoes of a battleship's broadside in a fiord. But it was human, and therefore more terrible than guns. I instinctively thought : “ If such are the symptoms of pleasure, what must be the symptoms of pain or disappointment ? ” Simultaneously

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with the expulsion of the unique noise the expression of the faces changed. Eyes sparkled ; teeth became prominent in enormous, uncontrolled smiles. Ferocious satisfaction had to find vent in ferocious gestures, wreaked either upon dead wood or upon the living tissues of fellow creatures. The gentle, mannerly sound of hand-clapping was a kind of light froth on the surface of the billowy sea of heart-felt applause. The host of the fifteen thousand might have just had their lives saved, or their children snatched from destruction and their wives from dishonour ; they might have been preserved from bankruptcy, starvation, prison, torture ; they might have been rewarding with their impassioned worship a band of national heroes. But it was not so. All that had happened was that the ball had rolled into the net of the Manchester Rovers' goal. Knype had drawn level. The reputation of the Five Towns before the jury of expert opinion that could distinguish between first-class football and second-class was maintained intact. I could hear specialists around me proving that though Knype had yet five League matches to play, its situation was safe. They pointed excitedly to a huge hoarding at one end of the ground on which appeared names of other clubs with changing figures. These clubs included the clubs which Knype would have to meet before the end of the season, and the figures indicated their fortunes on various grounds similar to this ground all over the country. If a goal was scored in Newcastle or in Southampton, the very Peru of first-class football, it was registered on that board and its possible effect on the destinies of Knype was instantly assessed. The calculations made were dizzying.

Then a little flock of pigeons flew up and separated, under the illusion that they were free agents and masters of the air, but really wafted away to fixed destinations on the stupendous atmospheric waves of still-continued cheering.

After a minute or two the ball was restarted, and the greater noise had diminished to the sensitive uneasy murmur which responded like a delicate instrument to the fluctuations of the game. Each feat and manœuvre of Knype drew generous applause in proportion to its intention or its success, and each sleight of the Manchester Rovers, successful or not, provoked a holy disgust. The attitude of the host had passed beyond morality into religion.

Then, again, while my attention had lapsed from the field, a devilish, a barbaric, and a deafening yell broke from those fifteen thousand passionate hearts. It thrilled me ; it genuinely frightened me. I involuntarily made the motion of swallowing.

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After the thunderous crash of anger from the host came the thin sound of a whistle. The game stopped. I heard the same word repeated again and again, in divers tones of exasperated fury :

“ Foul ! ”

I felt that I was hemmed in by potential homicides, whose arms were lifted in the desire of murder and whose features were changed from the likeness of man into the corporeal form of some pure and terrible instinct.

And I saw a long doll rise from the ground and approach a lesser doll with threatening hands.

“ Foul ! Foul ! ”

“ Go it, Jos ! Knock his neck out ! Jos ! He tripped thee up ! ”

There was a prolonged gesticulatory altercation between the three black dolls in leathern leggings and several of the white and the red dolls. At last one of the mannikins in leggings shrugged his shoulders, made a definitive gesture to the other two, and walked away towards the edge of the field nearest the stand. It was the unprincipled referee ; he had disallowed the foul. In the protracted duel between the offending Manchester forward and the great, honest Jos Myatt he had given another point to the enemy. As soon as the host realised the infamy, it yelled once more in heightened fury. It seemed to surge in masses against the thick iron railings that alone stood between the referee and death. The discreet referee was approaching the grand stand as the least unsafe place. In a second a handful of executioners had somehow got on to the grass. And in the next second several policemen were in front of them, not striking nor striving to intimidate, but heavily pushing them into bounds.

“ Get back there ! ” cried a few abrupt, commanding voices from the stand.

The referee stood with his hands in his pockets and his whistle in his mouth. I think that in that moment of acutest suspense the whole of his earthly career must have flashed before him in a phantasmagoria. And then the crisis was past. The inherent gentlemanliness of the outraged host had triumphed and the referee was spared.

“ Served him right if they'd man-handled him ! ” said a spectator.

“ Ay ! ” said another, gloomily, “ Ay ! And th' Football Association 'ud ha' fined us maybe a hundred quid and disqualified th' ground for the rest o' th' season ! ”

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“D—n th’ Football Association !”

“Ay! But you canna’!”

“Now lads! Play up Knype! Now lads! Give ’em hot hell!” Different voices heartily encouraged the home team as the ball was thrown into play.

The fouling Manchester forward immediately resumed possession of the ball. Experience could not teach him. He parted with the ball and got it again, twice. The devil was in him and in the ball. The devil was driving him towards Myatt. They met. And then came a sound quite new: a cracking sound, somewhat like the snapping of a bough, but sharper, more decisive.

“By Jove!” exclaimed Stirling. “That’s his bone!”

And instantly he was off down the staircase and I after him. But he was not the first doctor on the field. Nothing had been unforeseen in the wonderful organisation of this enterprise. A pigeon sped away and an official doctor and an official stretcher appeared, miraculously, simultaneously. It was tremendous. It inspired awe in me.

“He asked for it!” I heard a man say as I hesitated on the shore of the ocean of mud.

Then I knew that it was Manchester and not Knype that had suffered. The confusion and hubbub were in a high degree disturbing and puzzling. But one emotion emerged clear: pleasure. I felt it myself. I was aware of joy in that the two sides were now levelled to ten men apiece. I was mystically identified with the Five Towns, absorbed into their life. I could discern on every face the conviction that a divine providence was in this affair, that God could not be mocked. I too had this conviction. I could discern also on every face the fear lest the referee might give a foul against the hero Myatt, or even order him off the field, though of course the fracture was a simple accident. I too had this fear. It was soon dispelled by the news which swept across the entire enclosure like a sweet smell, that the referee had adopted the theory of a simple accident. I saw vaguely policemen, a stretcher, streaming crowds, and my ears heard a monstrous universal babbling. And then the figure of Stirling detached itself from the moving disorder and came to me.

“Well, Myatt’s calf was harder than the other chap’s, that’s all,” he said.

“Which is Myatt?” I asked, for the red and the white dolls had all vanished at close quarters, and were replaced by unrecognisably gigantic human animals, still clad, however, in dolls’ vests and dolls’ knickerbockers.

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Stirling warningly jerked his head to indicate a man not ten feet away from me. This was Myatt, the hero of the host and the darling of populations. I gazed up at him. His mouth and his left knee were red with blood, and he was piebald with thick patches of mud from his tousled crown to his enormous boot. His blue eyes had a heavy, stupid, honest glance; and of the three qualities stupidity predominated. He seemed to be all feet, knees, hands, and elbows. His head was very small,—the sole remainder of the doll in him.

A little man approached him, conscious—somewhat too obviously conscious—of his right to approach. Myatt nodded.

“Ye’n settled *him*, seemingly, Jos!” said the little man.

“Well,” said Myatt, with slow bitterness. “Hadn’t he been blooming well begging and praying for it, aw afternoon? Hadn’t he now?”

The little man nodded. Then he said in a lower tone:

“How’s missis, like?”

“Her’s altogether yet,” said Myatt. “Or I’d none ha’ played!”

“I’ve bet Watty half-a-dollar as it inna’ a lad!” said the little man.

Myatt seemed angry.

“Wilt bet me half a *quid* as it inna’ a lad?” he demanded, bending down and scowling and sticking out his muddy chin.

“Ay!” said the little man, not blenching.

“Evens?”

“Evens.”

“I’ll take thee, Charlie,” said Myatt, resuming his calm.

The whistle sounded. And several orders were given to clear the field. Eight minutes had been lost over a broken leg, but Stirling said that the referee would assuredly deduct them from the official time, so that after all the game would not be shortened.

“I’ll be up yon, to-morra morning,” said the little man.

Myatt nodded and departed. Charlie, the little man, turned on his heel and proudly rejoined the crowd. He had been seen of all in converse with supreme greatness.

Stirling and I also retired; and though Jos Myatt had not even done his doctor the honour of seeing him, neither of us, I think, was quite without a consciousness of glory: I cannot imagine why. The rest of the game was flat and tame. Nothing occurred. The match ended in a draw.

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IV.

We were swept from the Football ground on a furious flood of humanity,—carried forth and flung down a slope into a large waste space that separated the ground from the nearest streets of little reddish houses. At the bottom of the slope, on my suggestion, we halted for a few moments aside, while the current rushed forward and, spreading out, inundated the whole space in one marvellous minute. The impression of the multitude streaming from that gap in the wooden wall was like nothing more than the impression of a burst main which only the emptying of the reservoir will assuage. Anybody who wanted to commit suicide might have stood in front of that gap and had his wish. He would not have been noticed. The interminable and implacable infantry charge would have passed unheedingly over him. A silent, pre-occupied host, bent on something else now, and perhaps teased by the inconvenient thought that after all a draw is not as good as a win! It hurried blindly, instinctively outwards, knees and chins protruding, hands deep in pockets, chilled feet stamping. Occasionally some one stopped or slackened to light a pipe, and on being curtly bunted onward by a blind force from behind, accepted the hint as an atom accepts the law of gravity. The fever and ecstasy were over. What fascinated the Southern in me was the grim taciturnity, the steady stare (vacant or dreaming), and the heavy, muffled, multitudinous tramp shaking the cindery earth. The flood continued to rage through the gap.

Our automobile had been left at the Haycock Hotel; we went to get it, braving the inundation. Nearly opposite the stable-yard the electric trams started for Hanbridge, Bursley and Turnhill, and for Longshaw. Here the crowd was less dangerous, but still very formidable—to my eyes. Each tram as it came up, was savagely assaulted, seized, crammed, and possessed, with astounding rapidity. Its steps were the western bank of a Beresina. At a given moment the inured conductor, brandishing his leather-shielded arm with a pitiless gesture, thrust aspirants down into the mud and the tram rolled powerfully away. All this in silence.

After a few minutes a bicyclist swished along through the mud, taking the far side of the road, which was comparatively free. He wore grey trousers, heavy boots, and a dark cut-away coat, up the back of which a line of caked mud had deposited itself. On his head was a bowler-hat.

“How do, Jos?” cried a couple of boys, cheekily. And then there were a few adult greetings of respect.

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It was the hero, in haste.

"Out of it, there!" he warned impeters, between his teeth, and plugged on with bent head.

"He keeps the Foaming Quart up at Toft End," said the doctor. "It's the highest pub in the Five Towns. He used to be what they call a pot-hunter, a racing bicyclist, you know. But he's got past that, and he'll soon be past football. He's thirty-four if he's a day. That's one reason why he's so independent—that and because he's almost the only genuine native in the team."

"Why?" I asked. "Where do they come from, then?"

"Oh!" said Stirling as he gently started the car. "The club buys 'em, up and down the country. Four of 'em are Scots. A few years ago, an Oldham Club offered Knype £500 for Myatt, a big price—more than he's worth now! But he wouldn't go, though they guaranteed to put him into a first-class pub—a free house. He's never cost Knype anything except his wages and the goodwill of the Foaming Quart."

"What are his wages?"

"Don't know exactly. Not much. The Football Association fix a maximum, I daresay about four pounds a week. *Hi there! Are you deaf?*"

"Thee mind what tha'rt about!" responded a stout loiterer in our path, "or I'll take thy ears home for my tea, mester."

Stirling laughed.

In a few minutes we had arrived at Hanbridge, splashing all the way between two processions that crowded either footpath. And in the middle of the road was a third procession, of trams,—tram following tram, each gorged with passengers, frothing at the step with passengers; not the lackadaisical trams that I had seen earlier in the afternoon in Crown Square; a different race of trams, eager and impetuous velocities. We reached the *Signal* offices. No crowd of urchins to salute us this time!

Under the earth was the machine-room of the *Signal*. It reminded me of the bowels of a ship, so full was it of machinery. One huge machine clattered slowly, and a folded green thing dropped strangely on to a little iron table in front of us. Buchanan opened it, and I saw that the broken leg was in it at length, together with a statement that in the *Signal's* opinion the sympathy of every true sportsman would be with the disabled player. I began to say something to Buchanan, when suddenly I could not hear my own voice. The great machine, with another behind us, was working at a fabulous speed and with a fabulous clatter. All that my startled senses could clearly disentangle

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was that the blue arc-lights above us blinked occasionally, and that folded green papers were snowing down upon the iron table far faster than the eye could follow them. Tall lads in aprons elbowed me away and carried off the green papers in bundles, but not more quickly than the machine shed them. Buchanan put his lips to my ear. But I could hear nothing. I shook my head. He smiled, and led us out from the tumult.

"Come and see the boys take them," he said at the foot of the stairs.

In a sort of hall on the ground floor was a long counter, and beyond the counter a system of steel railings in parallel lines, so arranged that a person entering at the public door could only reach the counter by passing up or down each alley in succession. These steel lanes, which absolutely ensured the triumph of right over might, were packed with boys—the ragged urchins whom we had seen playing in the street. But not urchins now; rather young tigers! Perhaps half a dozen had reached the counter; the rest were massed behind, shouting and quarrelling. Through a hole in the wall, at the level of the counter, bundles of papers shot continuously, and were snatched up by servers, who distributed them in smaller bundles to the hungry boys; who flung down metal discs in exchange and fled, fled madly as though fiends were after them, through a third door, out of the pandemonium into the darkling street. And unceasingly the green papers appeared at the hole in the wall and unceasingly they were plucked away and borne off by those maddened children, whose destination was apparently Aix or Ghent, and whose wings were their tatters.

"What are those discs?" I inquired.

"The lads have to come and buy them earlier in the day," said Buchanan. "We haven't time to sell this edition for cash, you see."

"Well," I said as we left, "I'm very much obliged."

"What on earth for?" Buchanan asked.

"Everything," I said.

We returned through the squares of Hanbridge and by Trafalgar Road to Stirling's house at Bleakridge. And everywhere in the deepening twilight I could see the urchins, often hatless and sometimes scarcely shod, scudding over the lamp-reflecting mire with sheets of wavy green, and above the noises of traffic I could hear the shrill outcry: "*Signal. Football Edition. Football Edition. Signal.*" The world was being informed of the might of Jos Myatt, and of the averting of disaster from Knype, and of the results of over a hundred other matches—not counting Rugby.

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V.

During the course of the evening, when Stirling had thoroughly accustomed himself to the state of being in sole charge of an expert from the British Museum, London, and the high walls round his more private soul had yielded to my timid but constant attacks, we grew fairly intimate. And in particular the doctor proved to me that his reputation for persuasive raciness with patients was well founded. Yet up to the time of dessert I might have been justified in supposing that that much praised "manner" in a sick-room was nothing but a provincial legend. Such may be the influence of a quite inoffensive and shy Londoner in the country. At half-past ten, Titus being already asleep for the night in an armchair, we sat at ease over the fire in the study telling each other stories. We had dealt with the arts, and with medicine; now we were dealing with life, in those aspects of it which cause men to laugh and women uneasily to wonder. Once or twice we had mentioned the Brindleys. The hour for their arrival was come. But being deeply comfortable and content where I was, I felt no impatience. Then there was a tap on the window.

"That's Bobbie!" said Stirling, rising slowly from his chair. "*He* won't refuse whiskey, even if you do. I'd better get another bottle."

The tap was repeated, peevishly.

"I'm coming, laddie!" Stirling protested.

He slipped out through the hall and through the surgery to the side-door, I following, and Titus sneezing and snuffling in the rear.

"I say, mester," said a heavy voice as the doctor opened the door. It was not Brindley, but Jos Myatt. Unable to locate the bell-push in the dark, he had characteristically attacked the sole illuminated window. He demanded, or he commanded, very curtly, that the doctor should go up instantly to the Foaming Quart at Toft End.

Stirling hesitated a moment.

"All right, my man," said he calmly.

"Now?" the heavy, suspicious voice on the doorstep insisted.

"I'll be there before ye if ye don't sprint, man. I'll run up in the car." Stirling shut the door. I heard footsteps on the gravel path outside.

"Ye heard?" said he to me. "And what am I to do with ye?"

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"I'll go with you, of course," I answered.

"I may be kept up there a while."

"I don't care," I said roisterously. "It's a pub and I'm a traveller."

Stirling's household was in bed, and his assistant gone home. While he and Titus got out the car, I wrote a line for the Brindley's: "Gone with doctor to see patient at Toft End. Don't wait up, A. L." This we pushed under Brindley's front door on our way forth. Very soon we were vibrating up a steep street on the first speed of the car, and the yellow reflections of distant furnaces began to shine over house roofs below us. It was exhilaratingly cold, a clear and frosty night, tonic, bracing after the enclosed warmth of the study. I was joyous, but silently. We had quitted the kingdom of the god Pan; we were in Lucina's realm, its consequence, where there is no laughter. We were on a mission.

"I didn't expect this," said Stirling.

"No?" I said. "But seeing that he fetched you this morning—"

"Oh! That was only in order to be sure, for himself. His sister was there, in charge. Seemed very capable. Knew all about everything. Until ye get to the high social status of a clerk or a draper's assistant, people seem to manage to have their children without professional assistance."

"Then do you think there's anything wrong?" I asked.

"I'd not be surprised."

He changed to the second speed as the car topped the first bluff. We said no more. The night and the mission solemnised us. And gradually, as we rose towards the purple skies, the Five Towns wrote themselves out in fire on the irregular plain below.

"That's Hanbridge Town Hall," said Stirling, pointing to the right. "And that's Bursley Town Hall," he said, pointing to the left. And there were many other beacons, dominating the jewelled street-lines that faded on the horizon into golden-tinted smoke.

The road was never quite free of houses. After occurring but sparsely for half a mile, they thickened into a village—the suburb of Bursley called Toft End. I saw a moving red light in front of us. It was the reverse of Myatt's bicycle-lantern. The car stopped near the dark façade of the inn, of which two yellow windows gleamed. Stirling, under Myatt's shouted guidance, backed into an obscure yard under cover. The engine ceased to throb.

"Friend of mine," he introduced me to Myatt. "By the

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way, Loring, pass me my bag, will you ? Mustn't forget that." Then he extinguished the acetylene lamps, and there was no light in the yard except the ray of the bicycle lantern which Myatt held in his hand. We groped towards the house. Strange, every step that I take in the Five Towns seems to have the genuine quality of an adventure !

VI.

In five minutes I was of no account in the scheme of things at Toft End, and I began to wonder why I had come. Stirling, my sole protector, had vanished up the dark stairs of the house, following a stout, youngish woman in a white apron, who bore a candle. Jos Myatt, behind, said to me : " Happen you'd better go in there, mester," pointing to a half open door at the foot of the stairs. I went into a little room at the rear of the bar-parlour. A good fire burned in a small old-fashioned grate, but there was no other light. The inn was closed to customers, it being past eleven o'clock. On a bare table I perceived a candle, and ventured to put a match to it. I then saw almost exactly such a room as one would expect to find at the rear of the bar-parlour of an inn on the outskirts of an industrial town. It appeared to serve the double purpose of a living-room and of a retreat for favoured customers. The table was evidently one at which men drank. On a shelf was a row of bottles, more or less empty, bearing names famous in newspaper advertisements and in the House of Lords. The dozen chairs suggested an acute bodily discomfort such as would only be tolerated by a sitter all of whose sensory faculties were centred in his palate. On a broken chair in a corner was an insecure pile of books. A smaller table was covered with a chequered cloth on which were a few plates. Along one wall, under the window, ran a pitch-pine sofa upholstered with a stuff slightly dissimilar from that on the table. The mattress of the sofa was uneven and its surface wrinkled, and old newspapers and pieces of brown paper had been stowed away between it and the framework. The chief article of furniture was an effective walnut bookcase, the glass-doors of which were curtained with red cloth. The window, wider than it was high, was also curtained with red cloth. The walls, papered in a saffron tint, bore framed advertisements and a few photographs of self-conscious persons. The ceiling was as obscure as heaven ; the floor tiled, with a list rug in front of the steel fender.

I put my overcoat on the sofa, picked up the candle and

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glanced at the books in the corner : Lavater's indestructible work, a paper-covered Whitaker, the Licensed Victualler's Almanac, "Johnny Ludlow," the illustrated catalogue of the Exhibition of 1856, Cruden's Concordance, and seven or eight volumes of Knight's Penny Encyclopædia. While I was poring on these titles I heard movements overhead—previously there had been no sound whatever—and with guilty haste I restored the candle to the table and placed myself negligently in front of the fire.

"Now don't let me see ye up here any more till I fetch ye!" said a woman's distant voice—not crossly, but firmly. And then, crossly: "Be off with ye now!"

Reluctant boots on the stairs! Jos Myatt entered to me. He did not speak at first; nor did I. He avoided my glance. He was still wearing the cut-away coat with the line of mud up the back. I took out my watch, not for the sake of information, but from mere nervousness, and the sight of the watch reminded me that it would be prudent to wind it up.

"Better not forget that," I said, winding it.

"Ay!" said he gloomily. "It's a tip." And he wound up his watch; a large, thick, golden one.

This watch-winding established a basis of intercourse between us.

"I hope everything is going on all right," I murmured.

"What dun ye say?" he asked.

"I say I hope everything is going on all right," I repeated louder, and jerked my head in the direction of the stairs, to indicate the place from which he had come.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, as if surprised. "Now what'll ye have, mester?" He stood waiting. "It's my call, to-night."

I explained to him that I never took alcohol. It was not quite true, but it was as true as most general propositions are.

"Neither me!" he said shortly, after a pause.

"You're a teetotaler too?" I showed a little involuntary astonishment.

He put forward his chin.

"What do *you* think?" he said confidentially and scornfully. It was precisely as if he had said: "Do you think that anybody but a born ass would *not* be a teetotaler, in my position?"

I sat down on a chair.

"Take th' squab, mester," he said, pointing to the sofa. I took it.

He picked up the candle; then dropped it, and lighted a lamp which was on the mantelpiece between his vases of blue

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glass. His movements were very slow, hesitating, and clumsy. Blowing out the candle, which smoked for a long time, he went with the lamp to the bookcase. As the key of the bookcase was in his right pocket and the lamp in his right hand he had to change the lamp, cautiously, from hand to hand. When he opened the cupboard I saw a rich gleam of silver from every shelf of it except the lowest, and I could distinguish the forms of ceremonious cups with pedestals and immense handles.

"I suppose these are your pots?" I said.

"Ay!"

He displayed to me the fruits of his manifold victories. I could see him straining along endless cinder-paths and high-roads under hot suns, his great knees going up and down like treadles amid the plaudits and howls of vast populations. And all that now remained of that glory was these debased and vicious shapes, magnificently useless, grossly ugly, with their inscriptions lost in a mess of flourishes.

"Ay!" he said again, when I had fingered the last of them.

"A very fine show indeed!" I said, resuming the sofa.

He took a penny bottle of ink and a pen out of the bookcase, and also, from the lowest shelf, a bag of money and a long narrow account book. Then he sat down to the table and commenced accountancy. It was clear that he regarded his task as formidable and complex. To see him reckoning the coins, manipulating the pen, splashing the ink, scratching the page; to hear him whispering consecutive numbers aloud, and muttering mysterious anathemas against the untamable naughtiness of figures,—all this was painful, with the painfulness of a simple exercise rendered difficult by inaptitude and incompetence. I wanted to jump up and cry to him: "Get out of the way, man, and let me do it for you! I can do it all while you are wiping hairs from your pen on your sleeve." I was sorry for him because he was ridiculous—and even more grotesque than ridiculous. I felt, quite acutely, that it was a shame that he could not be for ever the central figure of a field of mud, kicking a ball into long and grandiose parabolas higher than gasometers, or breaking an occasional leg, surrounded by the violent affection of hearts whose melting-point was the exclamation, "Good old Jos!" I felt that if he must repose his existence ought to have been so contrived that he could repose in impassive and senseless dignity, like a mountain watching the flight of time. The conception of him tracing symbols in a ledger, counting shillings and sixpences, descending to arithmetic, and suffering those

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humiliations which are the invariable preliminaries to legitimate fatherhood, was shocking to a nice taste for harmonious fitness. . . . What, this precious and terrific organism, this slave with a specialty—whom distant towns had once been anxious to buy at the prodigious figure of five hundred pounds, obliged to sit in a mean chamber and wait silently while the woman of his choice encountered the supreme peril! And he would “soon be past football!” He was “thirty-four if a’ day!” It was the verge of senility! He was no longer worth five hundred pounds. Perhaps even now this jointed merchandise was only worth two hundred pounds! And “they”—the shadowy directors, who could not kick a ball fifty feet and who would probably turn sick if they broke a leg—“they” paid him four pounds a week for being the hero of a quarter of a million of people! He was the chief magnet to draw fifteen thousand sixpences and shillings of a Saturday afternoon into a company’s cash box, and here he sat splitting his head over fewer sixpences and shillings than would fill a half-pint pot! Jos, you ought in justice to have been José, with a thin red necktie down your breast (instead of a line of mud up your back), and embroidered breeches on those miraculous legs, and an income of a quarter of a million pesetas, and the languishing acquiescence of innumerable mantillas. Every moment you were getting older and stiffer; every moment was bringing nearer the moment when young men would reply curtly to their doddering elders: “Jos Myatt—who was ‘e?”

The putting-away of the ledger, the ink, the pen and the money was as exasperating as their taking-out had been. Then Jos, always too large for the room, crossed the tiled floor and mended the fire. A poker was more suited to his capacity than a pen. He glanced about him, uncertain and anxious, and then crept to the door near the foot of the stairs, and listened. There was no sound; and that was curious. The woman who was bringing into the world the hero’s child made no cry that reached us below. Once or twice I had heard muffled movements not quite overhead—somewhere above—but naught else. The doctor and Jos’s sister seemed to have retired into a sinister and dangerous mystery. I could not dispel from my mind pictures of what they were watching and what they were doing. The vast, cruel, fumbling clumsiness of nature, her lack of majesty in crises that ought to be majestic, her incurable indignity, disgusted me, aroused my disdain. I wanted, as a philosopher of all the cultures, to feel that the present was indeed a majestic crisis, to be so esteemed by a superior man. I could not. Though the crisis possibly intimidated me somewhat, yet on

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behalf of Jos Myatt, I was ashamed of it. This may be reprehensible, but it is true.

He sat down by the fire and looked at the fire. I could not attempt to carry on a conversation with him, and to avoid the necessity for any talk at all, I extended myself on the sofa and averted my face, wondering once again why I had accompanied the doctor to Toft End. The doctor was now in another, an inaccessible world. I dozed, and from my doze I was roused by Jos Myatt going to the door on the stairs.

"Jos," said a voice. "It's a girl."

Then a silence.

I admit there was a flutter in my heart. Another soul, another formed and unchangeable temperament, tumbled into the world! Whence? Whither? . . . As for the quality of majesty,—yes, if silver trumpets had announced the advent, instead of a stout, aproned woman, the moment could not have been more majestic in its sadness. I say "sadness": which is the inevitable and sole effect of those eternal and banal questions, "Whence? Whither?"

"Is her bad?" Jos whispered.

"Her's pretty bad," said the voice, but cheerily. "Bring me up another scuttle o' coal."

When he returned to the parlour, after being again dismissed, I said to him:

"Well, I congratulate you."

"I thank ye!" he said, and sat down. Presently I could hear him muttering to himself, mildly: "Hell! Hell! Hell!"

I thought: "Stirling will not be very long now, and we can depart home." I looked at my watch. It was a quarter to two. But Stirling did not appear, nor was there any message from him or sign. I had to resign myself to the predicament. As a faint chilliness from the window affected my back I drew my overcoat up to my shoulders as a counterpane. Through a gap between the red curtains of the window I could see a star blazing. It passed behind the curtain with disconcerting rapidity. The universe was swinging and whirling as usual.

VII.

Sounds of knocking disturbed me. In the few seconds that elapsed before I could realise just where I was and why I was there, the summoning knocks were repeated. The early sun was shining through the red blind. I sat up and straightened

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my hair, involuntarily composing my attitude so that nobody who might enter the room should imagine that I had been other than patiently wideawake all night. The second door of the parlour—that leading to the bar-room of the Foaming Quart—was open, and I could see the bar itself, with shelves rising behind it and the upright handles of a beer-engine at one end. Some one whom I could not see was evidently unbolting and unlocking the principal entrance to the inn. Then I heard the scraping of a creaky portal on the floor.

“Well, Jos, lad!”

It was the voice of the little man, Charlie, who had spoken with Myatt on the football field.

“Come in quick, Charlie. It’s cowl [cold],” said the voice of Jos Myatt gloomily.

“Ay! Cowl it is, lad! It’s above three mile as I’ve walked, and thou knows it, Jos. Give us a quartern o’ gin.”

The door grated again, and a bolt was drawn.

The two men passed together behind the bar, and so within my vision. Charlie had a grey muffler round his neck; his hands were far in his pockets and seemed to be at strain, as though trying to prevent his upper and his lower garments from flying apart. Jos Myatt was extremely dishevelled. In the little man’s demeanour towards the big one, there was now none of the self-conscious pride in the mere fact of acquaintance that I had noticed on the field. Clearly the two were intimate friends, perhaps relatives. While Jos was dispensing the gin, Charlie said in a low tone:

“Well, what luck, Jos?”

This was the first reference, by either of them, to the crisis.

Jos deliberately finished pouring out the gin. Then he said:

“There’s two on ’em, Charlie.”

“Two on em? What mean’st tha’, lad?”

“I mean as it’s twins.”

Charlie and I were equally startled.

“Thou never says!” he murmured, incredulous.

“Ay! One o’ both sorts,” said Jos.

“Thou never says!” Charlie repeated, holding his glass of gin steady in his hand.

“One come at summat after one o’clock, and th’ other between five and six. I had for fetch old woman Eardley to help. It were more than a handful for Susannah and th’ doctor.”

Astonishing, that I should have slept through these events!

“How is her?” asked Charlie quietly, as it were casually.

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I think this appearance of casualness was caused by the stoic suppression of the symptoms of anxiety.

"Her's bad," said Jos briefly.

"And I am na' surprised," said Charlie. And he lifted the glass. "Well—here's luck." He sipped the gin, savouring it on his tongue like a connoisseur and gradually making up his mind about its quality. Then he took another sip.

"Hast seen her?"

"I seed her for a minute, but our Susannah wouldna' let me stop i' th' room. Her was raving like."

"Missis?"

"Ay!"

"And th' babbies—hast seen *them*?"

"Ay! But I can make nowt out of 'em. Mrs. Eardley says as her's never seen no finer."

"Doctor gone?"

"That he has na'! He's bin up there all the blessed night, in his shirt-sleeves. I give him a stiff glass o' whiskey at five o'clock and that's all as he's had."

Charlie finished his gin. The pair stood silent.

"Well," said Charlie, striking his leg. "Swelp me bob! It fair beats me! Twins! Who'd ha' thought it? Jos, lad, thou mays't be thankful as it isna' triplets. Never did I think, as I was footing it up here this morning, as it was twins I was coming to!"

"Hast got that half quid in thy pocket?"

"What half quid?" said Charlie defensively.

"Now then. Chuck us it over!" said Jos, suddenly harsh and overbearing.

"I laid thee half quid as it 'ud be a wench," said Charlie doggedly.

"Thou'rt a liar, Charlie!" said Jos. "Thou laid'st half a quid as it wasna' a boy."

"Nay, nay!" Charlie shook his head.

"And a boy it is!" Jos persisted.

"It being a lad *and* a wench," said Charlie, with a judicial air, "and me 'aving laid as it 'ud be a wench, I wins." In his accents and his gestures I could discern the mean soul, who on principle never paid until he was absolutely forced to pay. I could see also that Jos Myatt knew his man.

"Thou laidst me as it wasna' a lad," Jos almost shouted. "And a lad it is, I tell thee."

"*And* a wench!" said Charlie; then shook his head.

The wrangle proceeded monotonously, each party repeating

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over and over again the phrases of his own argument. I was very glad that Jos did not know me to be a witness of the making of the bet; otherwise I should assuredly have been summoned to give judgment.

"Let's call it off, then," Charlie suggested at length. "That'll settle it. And it being twins——"

"Nay, thou old devil, I'll none call it off. Thou owes me half a quid, and I'll have it out of thee."

"Look ye here," Charlie said more softly. "I'll tell thee what'll settle it. Which on 'em come first, th' lad or th' wench?"

"Th' wench come first," Jos Myatt admitted, with resentful reluctance, dully aware that defeat was awaiting him.

"Well, then! Th' wench is thy eldest child. That's law, that is. And what was us betting about, Jos lad? Us was betting about thy eldest and no other. I'll admit as I laid it wasna' a lad, as thou sayst. And it *wasna'* a lad. First come is eldest, and us was betting about eldest."

Charlie stared at the father in triumph.

Jos Myatt pushed roughly past him in the narrow space behind the bar, and came into the parlour. Nodding to me curtly, he unlocked the bookcase and took two crown pieces from a leathern purse which lay next to the bag. Then he returned to the bar, and banged the coins on the counter with fury.

"Take thy brass!" he shouted angrily. "Take thy brass! But thou'rt a damned shark, Charlie, and if anybody 'ud give me a plug o' bacca for doing it, I'd bash thy face in."

The other sniggered contentedly as he picked up his money.

"A bet's a bet," said Charlie.

He was clearly accustomed to an occasional violence of demeanour from Jos Myatt, and felt no fear. But he was wrong in feeling no fear. He had not allowed, in his estimate of the situation, for the exasperated condition of Jos Myatt's nerves under the unique experiences of the night.

Jos's face twisted into a hundred wrinkles and his hand seized Charlie by the arm whose hand held the coins.

"Drop 'em!" he cried loudly, repenting his naïve honesty. "Drop 'em! Or I'll——"

The stout woman, her apron all soiled, now came swiftly and scarce heard into the parlour, and stood at the door leading to the bar-room.

"What's up, Susannah?" Jos demanded in a new voice.

"Well may ye ask what's up!" said the woman. "Shouting and brangling there, ye sots!"

"What's up?" Jos demanded again, loosing Charlie's arm.

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"Her's gone!" the woman feebly whimpered, "Like that!" with a vague movement of the hand indicating suddenness. Then she burst into wild sobs, and rushed madly back whence she had come, and the sound of her sobs diminished as she ascended the stairs, and expired altogether in the distant shutting of a door.

The men looked at each other.

Charlie restored the crown-pieces to the counter, and pushed them towards Jos.

"Here!" he murmured faintly.

Jos flung them savagely to the ground. Another pause followed.

"As God is my witness," he exclaimed solemnly, his voice saturated with feeling, "As God is my witness," he repeated, "I'll n'er touch a footba' again!"

Little Charlie gazed up at him sadly, plaintively, for what seemed a long while.

"It's good-bye to th' First League, then, for Knype!" he tragically muttered, at length.

VIII.

Dr. Stirling drove the car very slowly back to Bursley. We glided gently down into the populous valleys. All the stunted trees were coated with rime, which made the sharpest contrast with their black branches and the black mud under us. The high chimneys sent forth their black smoke calmly and tirelessly into the fresh blue sky. Sunday had descended on the vast landscape like a physical influence. We saw a snake of children winding out of a dark brown Sunday school into a dark brown chapel. And up from the valleys came all the bells of all the temples of all the different gods of the Five Towns, chiming, clanging, ringing, each insisting that it alone invited to the altar of the one God. And priests and acolytes of the various cults hurried occasionally along, in silk hats and bright neckties, and smooth coats with folded handkerchiefs sticking out of the pockets, busy, happy and self-important, the convinced heralds of eternal salvation: no doubt nor hesitation as to any fundamental truth had ever entered into their minds. We passed through a long, straight street of new red houses with blue slate roofs, all gated and gardened. Here and there a girl with her hair in pins and a rough brown apron over a gaudy frock was stoning a front-step. And half-way down the street a man in a scarlet jersey, supported by two women in blue bonnets, was

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beating a drum and crying aloud : “ My friends, you may die to-night. Where, I ask you, where——?” But he had no friends ; not even a boy heeded him. The drum continued to bang in our rear.

I enjoyed all this. All this seemed to me to be fine, seemed to throw off the true, fine, romantic savour of life. I would have altered nothing in it. Mean, harsh, ugly, squalid, crude, barbaric,—yes, but what an intoxicating sense in it of the organised vitality of a vast community unconscious of itself ! I would have altered nothing even in the events of the night. I thought of the rooms at the top of the staircase of the Foaming Quart,—mysterious rooms which I had not seen and never should see, recondite rooms from which a soul had slipped away and into which two had come, scenes of anguish and of frustrated effort ! Historical rooms, surely ! And yet not a house in the hundreds of houses past which we slid but possessed rooms ennobled and made august by happenings exactly as impressive in their tremendous inexplicableness.

The natural humanity of Jos Myatt and Charlie, their fashion of comporting themselves in a sudden stress, pleased me. How else should they have behaved ? I could understand Charlie’s prophetic dirge over the ruin of the Knype Football Club. It was not that he did not feel the tragedy in the house. He had felt it, and because he had felt it he had uttered at random, foolishly, the first clear thought that ran into his head.

Stirling was quiet. He appeared to be absorbed in steering, and looked straight in front, yawning now and again. He was much more fatigued than I was. Indeed I had slept pretty well. He said as we swerved into Trafalgar Road and overtook the aristocracy on its way to chapel and church :

“ Well, ye let yeself in for a night, young man ! No mistake ! ”

He smiled, and I smiled.

“ What’s going to occur up there ? ” I asked, indicating Toft End.

“ What do ye mean ? ”

“ A man like that—left with two babies ! ”

“ Oh ! ” he said. “ They’ll manage that all right. His sister’s a widow. She’ll go and live with him. She’s as fond of those infants already as if they were her own.”

We drew up at his double gates.

“ Be sure ye explain to Brindley,” he said, as I left him, “ that it isn’t my fault ye’ve had a night out of bed. It was

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your own doing. I'm going to get a bit of sleep now. See you this evening. Bob's asked me to supper."

A servant was sweeping Bob Brindley's porch, and the front door was open. I went in. The sound of the piano guided me to the drawing-room. Brindley, the morning cigarette between his lips, was playing one of Maurice Ravel's "Miroirs." He held his head back so as to keep the smoke out of his eyes. His children in their blue jerseys were building bricks on the carpet.

Without ceasing to play, he addressed me calmly :

"You're a nice chap ! Where the devil have you been ? "

And one of the little boys glancing up, said with roguish imitative innocence, in his high shrill voice :

"Where the del you been ? "

A Sailor (Old Style)

By R. B. Cunninghame Graham

HE was, I think, my earliest recollection of the distinct personality of a man. No one, it appeared to me, could ever have been half as strong, or half as impervious to cold, as he was. I can still see him in my mind's eye, when I had to accompany him in a Sunday walk in the breezy little watering-place where we usually passed the winter—striding along, not with long steps, after the fashion of my other relations, who were mostly sportsmen before their Lord, but with a short, rapid, decided gait, as if he half expected the esplanade would pitch suddenly under the influence of the perpetual northerly winds, which usually prevailed.

My brother and I used to trot shivering beside him, and stand huddled up with misery, when he met and hailed some other old sea-going craft such as himself, who was now safely docked in the local club. He never, as far as I can remember, wore a great coat, nor did his large, muscular, hairy but well-kept hands, ever grow red with cold. On his fourth finger, above his wedding ring, he wore a large, antique cornelian, with the head of a Roman emperor or Greek philosopher cut deeply in the stone.

Somehow or other this ring and his strong hairy hands, set one a-thinking (in those days) upon the Spanish Main; on long, raking schooners with tapering masts, and a mere rail for bulwarks; on baracoons and slaves; on the Blue Mountains and Port Royal; on Yellow Jack, and on enormous sharks that followed boats, their dorsal fins emerging now and then as a perpetual *memento mori* to the crew, who dressed in huge wide trousers and with pigtails to a man. All had great hairy hands, well set with heavy rings beaten out on a marline-spike from a doubloon. No ship could anchor at Spithead without his knowing it at once. Sometimes, he would ask one of the long-shoremen her name, and get the answer: "As far as I makes out, she be the *Warrior* or the *Black Prince*, or one o' that class,

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admiral." He, after shutting up with a click the telescope, which he had borrowed from the longshoreman, would hand it back to him with a "thankee," and perhaps remark, "Yes, yes, fine class of ships those are, better than that sea-coffin in which I saw poor Cooper Coles go off on his last cruise."

We, that is my brother and myself, who all the time had stood and shivered on the pier, our heels just fitting neatly into the cracks between the planks, assented cheerfully, for naturally we knew most of the ships of that remote, long-buried period, at least by name, and had heard often from the admiral the story of the ill-fated *Captain* and how she turned turtle in a stormy night outside Corcubión, on nearing Finisterre. The tale was ever fresh to us, and when it came to the episode of several men clambering upon her bottom, and there hearing the stifling stokers scream through the keelson valves, we felt we had been there too.

The admiral had passed his twelfth or thirteenth birthday at sea (in the old *Barham*), and since that time, till he had made his final landfall in the Isle of Wight, had always been at sea. The suns and winds of forty years had tanned him a fine clear brown, without a patch of red; nothing in after life altered the colour of his skin, neither the summer heat nor the winter cold had power, either to deepen or to redden it, and looking at him you divined at once that he had walked hundreds of miles upon ship's decks, during the long commissions of his youth, when ships were months at sea. He used to tell us, how after three years, chiefly in Marmorice Bay, or just off Acre, he had anchored at Spithead on Sunday and "gone ashore my boys on Monday to see my mother who lived at Gosport, and on Thursday night, I was officer of the middle watch (in the old *Castor*) going down Channel on a three years cruise. Not time to get my linen washed, and only managed to get my traps aboard, out of the old *Pyramus* just as the *Castor* was getting under way. Quick work! Oh yes! Times have altered since those days. . . . I never saw my poor old mother after that, as I was transferred from the *Castor* and stayed six years out in the West Indies. Sailors were sailors, then." They were indeed, and when one looks back on their lives one does not wonder that they were a race apart, and certainly the admiral was as far removed from a mere landsman as it was possible to be. He had something of candour and simplicity, combined with a shrewd common sense, which showed itself in unexpected ways and which you half expected, when you looked at his sturdy build and his immense square head, thatched with perennial grey hair and set in bushy

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whiskers, which early in his life had turned snow white, but yet conveyed no look of age.

Born during the French War, in which his father fought, he touched with one hand, as it were, the fighting captains of an older age, having passed all his youth, as they had theirs, eating salt pork and junk, and biscuits which he tapped upon the gun-room table to knock the weevils out. So much of the old time he had, he never could endure to see fresh water wasted, but would exclaim : " I cannot bear to see it run away to waste, nor would you had you been like myself upon two pints a day, down in low latitudes. Two pints a day, boys, for washing and cooking, and I had to hold my nose when I drank it, without a dash of rum." With the other hand, so to speak, he touched, not the present, but the days of the transition navy. Not of course with his own good will, but by force of circumstances.

Standing beside him, on a little undercliff which looks out over Spithead, thirty-five, or was it five and forty years ago, I still can hear him say : " Yes, there lies my old ship, the *Edgar*, a hulk like her old captain, and that little paddle-flopping thing " (pointing with his glass to an Admiralty tender) " is the tin-kettle sort of thing that takes her place." Why he brought up in the cramped, hilly, sandy, stucco-built watering-place in which he lived, with its long ranges of rubble walls stuck with glass bottles, its pill-box houses, shut in by hedges of dusty bay and laurestinus, I never understood. Time could not change its infinite vulgarity, nor has it changed it in the least, as I am told.

It still lies facing north, a veritable wind-trap with its two piers, one made of wood, the other fashioned, as I imagine, out of tin, stretching out far into the sea, and giving it an air as of a kind of ship. Perhaps he was attracted by that air, as of a ship, perhaps it was because it offered easy access to Portsmouth dockyard, to which the admiral used to gravitate occasionally to see new ships and to compare them disparagingly with the old, in the same way that farmers gravitate towards the nearest market-town, to watch the price of corn.

Well can I see the place, looking down through a vista of long years, with rows and rows of invalid bath-chairs, moored up outside the pier. The shops, now probably long altered, I could enter one by one, and ask for things that I remember as a boy, especially of the jeweller at the first corner of the chief street, on the left (going up from the pier), in which a red enamel watch, with a dog in rather brassy-looking gold, hung in the window, as it appeared, for all created time. The arcade, in

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which glass bottles filled with sand from Alum Bay jostled shell baskets, and boats constructed never to sail with any kind of wind, which fell helpless on their broadsides as soon as they were launched, must surely still be there. It had, as I remember, a mysterious annexe, behind the veil (of mystery) so to speak, in which displayed on a raised staging, such as one sees in an old-fashioned green-house now and then, were pincushions, cases for needles, and yard measures in which the tape was hidden in a shell. Over both "cades," such was the name we and our bold compeers had given to them, presided damsels, with long ringlets, dressed in black gowns, with linen cuffs and collars, the latter fastened at their necks by a neat artificial bow of ribbon either rose-pink or blue.

Churches, of course, abounded in the place, all very low as regards ritual, and in them admirals and generals galore repeated the responses fervently in voices of command. In one of these the admiral was a churchwarden, why I could not make out, as he had generally something disparaging to say of clergymen; though, I believe, he held religious naval views, knowing the articles of war enjoined attention upon public worship, in a disciplinary way. So, neatly dressed in a well-cut frock coat, which he referred to as a "jimmy-swinging," he would devoutly look into his hat for a few moments, when he entered church, and then compose himself square by the lifts and braces in his seat, and opening his prayer-book, which he took out of a hassock with practicable front, assume an air as of a criticising worship—that is of criticism towards the clergyman, but of devout belief in the church service, until the sermon time. This always irritated him, so when the time arrived to carry round the plate, he would step busily out into the aisle, looking unfeignedly relieved, doing his duty like an officer and a gentleman, crossing his fellow churchwarden in an elaborate sort of maze, as they met at the lectern. There they fell into line, advancing bowing to the altar rails, where they gave up their plates. When he came back and took his seat, he usually informed us underneath his breath as to the probable amount collected, commenting freely on the sums contributed in a low grumbling way.

This sort of Pyrrhic dance, in which the admiral took a part each Sunday morning, as it were half against his will, just as a rabbit lacks the power to run before a weasel, was a delight to us as boys, and sometimes during its execution, even in the sacred edifice, built as it was according to the canons of congregational Gothic, without a clerestory and with the roof jammed flat

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upon the walls, we used to pinch each other and murmur an absurd old negro song, with the refrain, "Cross over Jonathan, figure in, Jemima," as the churchwardens waltzed through the aisle.

Most of the day the admiral sat painting in water-colours, an art which he had learned in youth, and been confirmed in by having taken the first prize at the old Naval College fifty years ago. It gave him infinite enjoyment, and he filled sketch-book after sketch-book, with ships and sailors, brigs, schooners, yawls, and *chasse-marées*, luggers, feluccas and Bahama boats, barges, canoes, caïques and anything that sailed. His colouring was muddy and his seas wooden and opaque so that the craft appeared to sit upon blue boards; but still were life-like, each rope and every sail being depicted in its proper place, a fact he would remark upon with some complacency in talking of his work.

Nothing would please him better than to sit down and copy sea-pieces, which occupation often took him weeks, and when at last concluded, threw quite a novel look on the original, for he corrected any errors in the rigging, now and then putting the ship upon a different tack, and adding here and there a rock, or light-house, if it should come into his mind.

Landscape he seldom painted; but when he did, looked on himself apparently in the light of a pivot, for generally his pictures turned out panoramic and so minute that the first time I entered Lisbon, I knew the harbour from the squat Tower of Bélem to the Aguido Palace, with every street and a percentage of the houses, from plans that he had made. I believe that had I gone to any harbour in the Levant, starting at Malta and finishing in Marmorice, I might have, though a landsman, taken in a ship without a pilot, so well I knew the light-houses, capes, rocks and castles in each and every port.

The morning's work achieved and the great yellow goblet of Bohemian glass, in which he always dipped his brushes, emptied, and all his paints and apparatus safely bestowed in cupboards, like the lockers of a ship, that is the lockers of a ship of those days, and lunch over, the admiral generally went for a walk. If it was blowing fresh from the north-west, the prevailing wind of the delectable half-seaport, half-watering-place, he walked upon the pier. Young ladies in tarpaulin hats and blue serge jerseys promenaded up and down showing as much as was convenient of their ankles, and each one with her baronet in tow, for I should say, though peers were scarce, that baronets abounded in the town, each with his single eye-glass in his eye; for in

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those days all self-respecting men looked out upon their fellows, as it were, darkling, through a pane of glass. The admiral cared for none of these things, but only looked upon the pier as, in the summer, a good sketching-ground, and in the winter as a sort of deck on which to snuff into his frame the odour of the sea.

We looked upon a walk upon the pier in weather such as this with terror, for the admiral was sure to stop and say to some old mariner, one in especial, Josiah Southcote, a Plymouth Brother and the owner of a wherry called the *Pearl*: "Nice day for a sail, Southcote," and then we trembled in our shoes. Sometimes, the owner of the abominable craft, in which we passed so many hours, limp and sea-green, as he leaned up against a sail, dressed in blue pilot cloth, as thick as a thin plank, a brownish duffel shirt, sea-booted to the knees, and with his loose blue trousers coming close to his arm-pits, supported by stout leather braces, about a foot in length, would answer: "Lor, admiral, it does blow a leetle fresh for the young gentlemen." This sometimes was a respite, and at others served but as an incentive and we used to put to sea, seated down in a sort of well where we saw nothing, but, at the same time, received plenty of salt water down our backs, shivering miserably. At times one or the other of us steered, jamming the *Pearl* about across the Solent, in the agonies of sea-sickness, till we relapsed upon the seat inert and miserable. Still I believe we liked it, and I am certain that the admiral enjoyed it hugely, saying it did us twice the good of any medicine; and as for Southcote, of course, it was his business, and so we all were pleased.

All these slight foibles and an infinity of tales he had about the "Nix Mangiare" stairs of Malta, Leipnitz Balls in Kingston, or Port Royal and the like, were but excrescences upon the bark. The tree was of the sort from which the Navy of old times was built, round, honest, and English to the core.

Most certainly he had peculiarities, for every one worth writing of is sure to have them. He hated double topsails, consigning their inventor (Cunningham) to perdition with his winching apparatus, like a window-blind, "a lubberly affair that wears your sails out at the bunt, and in a gale of wind is certain to make you lose a spar."

Quite naturally he never could pronounce a single word in any foreign language so that any one could recognise it, with the exception of Portuguese which he spoke pretty fluently, having acquired it, I suppose, in theatres and cafés about Lisbon during the days in which he laboured at the minute ingenious plan in water-colours which had been so useful to me in making my first

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landfall on that coast. Treated as he had been, during the most part of his sea-time, to all the rigours of the Admiralty, now freezing off Newfoundland, and again melting off St. Helena or Port Royal ; lacking advancement always, and seeing others younger than himself put over him, by intent, or by chance, he never grumbled at his luck. In fact, I think, he thought he was a lucky man always to have been employed, and to have been flag-captained in the Channel for a brief space of time. Of such as he was is the kingdom of the sailor's heaven, that is, if single-mindedness and kindness, with a high sense of honour and a charity which though it naturally began at home extended to the limits of his world, entitled him to a free pass.

No one whom I have met had such a large collection of "forebitters" in his repertory. Not that he ever sang, as far as I know ; but on the other hand he whistled all the day, between his teeth, just like the wind between the hinges of a door, which habit made some people nervous, but to me seemed natural, as natural as it was to the longshoremen about the port to chew tobacco or to hitch up their slacks. When out of doors, especially when walking on the pier or seated in the abominable *Pearl* wherry, he hummed in a low voice, such lyrics of the sea as "Tom's gone to 'ello !" Or the adventures of poor Reuben Renzo, who, if I recollect, shipped in a whaler and underwent strange things. These "chanties," if he caught Mr. Southcote looking at him, or observed that we were dwelling on the words with interest, anxiously waiting for the verses which ended in an oath, he stopped at once and usually essayed to turn into ridicule, saying that no one sang them nowadays. This certainly was true ; but still they photographed themselves upon my memory, one in especial, which told about something in the French wars and had a chorus, which I can hear occasionally (in my mind's ear) during the piano passages of music at a concert. It was as follows :

The little *Weazel* brought up the rear,
Her guns and quarters being clear,
The guns being primed ready for to discharge,
She went through the fleet like a twelve-oared barge.

This song, in my opinion as a boy, went far to constitute a sort of apostolic succession from Sir Cloudesley Shovel, from Drake and Frobisher and from the other worthies who, as the old sea-phrase goes, entered the services through the hawseholes and by degrees got aft. I do not think the fact of his full repertory of old sea-songs was probably the reason of his being made a magistrate, the people of the place most likely never having

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heard of Fletcher of Saltoun and his dictum that he cared not who made a nation's laws as long as he could write its songs. Truth in the abstract (such as the above) seldom appeals to those who dwell in watering-places.

Thus I am forced to think (against my reason) that in some way or other the mere fact of the admiral's patent honesty had recommended him to the mysterious powers who appoint magistrates, for I am certain no one ever lived less capable of pushing himself to any kind of place. Once duly on the bench, "a beak" as he himself would say, he must have been rather a thorn in the sides of all his fellow magistrates, who generally were dissenting tradesmen, with an occasional Low-Church general of marked religious views. The admiral's view of course in general (with the exception of mutiny and piracy on the high seas) was that the culprit was a poor devil whom it was best to handle gently, remembering all are frail. Indeed he gave great scandal, in the case of a woman whom he referred to as "a poor whore," charged with solicitation, or prostitution or some one or another of the lesser misdemeanours of that sort, by saying: "After all it took two people to commit the fault." Sound reasoning in its way, and human, and of a kind that law-givers often forget, having grown too old, or become too circumspect for any cakes and ale.

About this time, for nothing, even in watering-places, succeeds so well as success, certain fly-drivers and bath-chairmen began to trim their whiskers after the pattern of the admiral's. Whether they did it as a compliment to him for his humanity upon the bench, or only from the fact of his promotion to that elevated seat, I cannot tell. Perhaps it was as theologians tell us that mankind must always worship something or another, and when we worship it is natural to wish to look as like as possible to those whom we adore. No speculation of that kind, I think, entered the admiral's head. In fact I am sure of it, remembering a story of a chaplain in a ship that he once sailed in, whose captain having heard a sermon upon Faith, in a disciplinary manner called the preacher into his cabin and commanded him next Sunday to hold forth on Works, or never preach again. "A damned good order," he was wont to say, after referring to the episode; not that in any way himself did he reject the spiritual side of things, as his assiduous carrying round of the plate went far to testify.

No oak could have been stancher than he was, so that when first we noticed that he began to fail, it struck us with surprise, and when we saw that he was, so to speak, preparing to set sail, leaving each day some of the lumber that would have been of

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no use upon his voyage, it seemed impossible and an injustice that he too must go and join the other admirals and generals whom he had seen drop off, as it were naturally, leaving the watering-place as little altered as if they had swaggered down the pier.

Time touched him tenderly. At first but shortening the area of his walks, intensifying gout ; then by degrees forbidding his excursions in the *Pearl*, a deprivation which he endured with the more equanimity because Josiah Southcote had for some time rested in the churchyard, his sailings over, his ropes all flemished down, and with "affliction sore" inscribed upon the headstone, which bore a cable twisting round the rim.

What actually took him away, I cannot recollect. The kind of man he was ought to have died at sea and been committed to the deep, in the sure hope of joining Drake and Frobisher upon some main, where there is always a fair wind. I helped to lay him in his coffin and to cross the strong, brown, hairy hands upon his breast, and I remember wishing that he could just have waited long enough to see a red Aurora Borealis, which lit the sky, upon the night he died, for I am sure he would have said that it was most unusual to see the Northern Lights below some latitude or other, or something of the kind.

Some Reminiscences

By Joseph Conrad

PART II.

I.

IN the career of the most unliterary of writers, in the sense that literary ambition had never entered the world of his imagination, the coming into existence of the first book is quite an inexplicable event. In my own case I cannot trace it back to any mental or psychological cause which one could point out and hold to. The greatest of my gifts being a consummate capacity for doing nothing, I cannot even point to boredom as a rational stimulus for taking up a pen. The pen at any rate was there, and there is nothing wonderful in that. Everybody keeps a pen (the cold steel of our days) in his rooms in this enlightened age of penny stamps and halfpenny postcards. In fact, this was the epoch when by means of postcard and pen Mr. Gladstone had made the reputation of a novel or two. And I too had a pen rolling about somewhere—the seldom-used, the reluctantly-taken-up pen of a sailor ashore, the pen rugged with the dried ink of abandoned attempts, of answers delayed longer than decency permitted, of letters begun with infinite reluctance and put off suddenly till next day—till next week as likely as not! The neglected, uncared-for pen, flung away at the slightest provocation, and under the stress of dire necessity hunted for without enthusiasm, in a sort of perfunctory, grumpy worry, in the “Where the devil *is* the beastly thing gone to?” ungracious spirit. Where indeed! It might have been reposing behind the sofa for a day or so. My landlady’s anæmic daughter (as Ollendorff would have expressed it), though commendably neat, had a lordly, careless manner of approaching her domestic duties. Or it might even be resting delicately poised on its point by the side of the table-leg, and when picked up show a gaping, inefficient beak which would have discouraged any man of

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literary instincts. But not me! "Never mind. This will do."

O days without guile! If anybody had told me then that a devoted household, having a generally exaggerated idea of my talents and importance, were to be put into a state of tremor and flurry by the fuss I would make because of a suspicion that somebody had touched my sacrosanct pen of authorship, I would have never deigned as much as the contemptuous smile of unbelief. There are imaginings too unlikely for any kind of notice, too wild for indulgence itself, too absurd for a smile. Perhaps, had that seer of the future been a friend, I should have been secretly saddened. "Alas!" I would have thought, looking at him with an unmoved face, "the poor fellow is going mad."

I would have been, without doubt, saddened; for in this world where the journalists read the signs of the sky, and the wind of heaven itself, blowing where it listeth, does so under the prophetic management of the Meteorological Office, but where the secret of human hearts cannot be captured either by prying or praying, it was infinitely more likely that the sanest of my friends should nurse the germ of incipient madness than that I should turn into a writer of tales.

To survey with wonder the changes of one's own self is a fascinating pursuit for idle hours. The field is so wide, the surprises so varied, the subject so full of unprofitable but curious hints as to the work of unseen forces, that one does not weary easily of it. I am not speaking here of megalomaniacs who rest uneasy under the crown of their unbounded conceit—who really never rest in this world, and when out of it go on fretting and fuming on the unworthy circumstances of their last habitation, where all men must lie in an obscure equality. Neither am I thinking of those ambitious minds who, always looking forward to some aim of achieved greatness, can spare no time for a detached, impersonal glance upon themselves.

And that's a pity. They are unlucky. These two kinds, together with the much larger band of the totally unimaginative, of those unfortunate beings in whose empty and unseeing gaze (as a great French writer has put it) "the whole universe vanishes into a blank nothingness," miss, perhaps, the true task of us men whose day is short on this earth, the abode of conflicting opinions. The ethical view of the universe involves us in the last instance in so many cruel and absurd contradictions, amongst which the last vestiges of faith, hope, charity, and even of reason itself, seem ready to perish, that I have come to suspect that the aim of creation cannot be ethical at all. I

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would fondly believe that its object is purely spectacular : a spectacle for awe, love, adoration, or hate, if you like, but in this view, and in this view alone, never for despair. Those visions, delicious or poignant, are a moral end in themselves. The rest is our affair—the laughter, the tears, the tenderness, the indignation, the high tranquillity of a steeled heart, the detached curiosity of a subtle mind—that's our affair; and the unwearied self-forgetful attention to every phase of the living universe reflected in our consciousness may be our appointed task on this earth—a task in which fate has perhaps engaged nothing of us except our conscience, gifted with a voice in order to bear true testimony to the visible wonder, the haunting terror, the infinite passion and the illimitable serenity, the supreme law and the abiding mystery of the sublime spectacle.

Chi lo sà ? It may be true. In this view there is room for every religion except for the inverted creed of impiety, the mask and cloak of arid despair ; for every joy and every sorrow, for every fair dream, for every charitable hope. The great aim is to remain true to the emotions called out of the deep encircled by the firmament of stars, whose infinite numbers and awful distances may move us to laughter or tears (was it the Walrus or the Carpenter, in the poem, who “wept to see such quantities of sand”?), or, again, to a properly steeled heart, may matter nothing at all.

The casual quotation which had suggested itself out of a poem full of merit leads me to remark that in the conception of the purely spectacular universe, where inspiration of every sort has a rational existence, the artist of every kind finds a natural place ; and amongst them the poet as the seer *par excellence*, and even the writer of prose, who, in his less noble and more toilsome task, should be a man with the steeled heart. He is worthy of a place, providing he looks on with undimmed eyes and keeps laughter out of his voice, let who will laugh or cry. Yes ! Even he, the prose artist of fiction, which after all is but truth often dragged out of a well, and clothed in the painted robe of imaged phrases—even he has his place amongst kings, demagogues, priests, charlatans, dukes, giraffes, Cabinet Ministers, Fabians, bricklayers, apostles, ants, scientists, Kaffirs, soldiers, sailors, elephants, lawyers, dandies, microbes and constellations of a universe whose amazing spectacle is a moral end in itself.

Here I perceive (speaking without offence) the reader assuming a subtle expression, as if the cat were let out of the bag. I take the novelist's freedom to observe the reader's mind formulating the exclamation, “That's it ! The fellow talks *pro domo*.”

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Indeed it was not the intention ! When I shouldered the bag I was not aware of the cat inside. But, after all, why not ? The fair courtyards of the House of Art are thronged by many humble retainers, and there is no retainer so devoted as he who is allowed to sit on the doorstep. The fellows who have got inside are apt to think too much of themselves. This last remark, I beg to state, is not malicious within the definition of the law of libel. It's fair comment on a matter of public interest. But never mind. *Pro domo* : so be it. For his house *tant que vous voudrez*. And yet in truth I was by no means anxious to justify my existence. The attempt would have been not only needless and absurd, but almost inconceivable, in a purely spectacular universe, where no such disagreeable necessity can possibly arise. It is sufficient for me to say (and I am saying it at some length in these pages) : *J'ai vécu*. I have existed, obscure amongst the wonders and terrors of my time, as the Abbé Sieyès, the original utterer of the quoted words, had managed to exist through the high-minded violences, the upright crimes, and the vain enthusiasms of the French Revolution. *J'ai vécu*, as I apprehend most of us manage to exist, missing all along the varied forms of destruction by a hair's-breadth, saving my body, that's clear, and perhaps my soul also, but not without some damage here and there to the fine edge of my conscience, that heirloom of the ages, of the race, of the group, of the family, colourable and plastic, fashioned by the words, the looks, the acts, and even by the silences and abstentions surrounding one's childhood, tinged in a complete scheme of delicate shades and crude colours by the inherited traditions, beliefs, or prejudices—unaccountable, despotic, persuasive, and often, in its texture, romantic.

And often romantic ! . . . The matter in hand, however, is to keep these reminiscences from turning into confessions, a form of literary activity discredited by Jean Jacques Rousseau on account of the extreme thoroughness he brought to the work of justifying his own existence ; for that such was his purpose is palpably, even grossly, visible to an unprejudiced eye. But then, you see, the man was not a writer of fiction. He was an artless moralist, as is clearly demonstrated by his anniversaries being celebrated with marked emphasis by the heirs of the French Revolution, which was not a political movement at all, but a great outburst of morality. Moral earnestness in the absence of imaginative faculty runs easily into the terms of murder and spoliation. The grace of imagination, which exalts our feelings, is the only thing which can soothe the cruel passion of conscientious convictions. The writer hailed as the Father of the French Revolution (the

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husband of the meek Thérèse was obviously predestined to know nothing of his various children) was not in general an abundantly blessed person, and in that respect he was not blessed, at all. He had no imagination, as the most casual perusal of "Émile" will prove. He was no novelist, whose first virtue is the exact understanding of the limits traced by the reality of his time to the play of his invention. Inspiration comes from the earth, which has a past, a history, a future, not from the cold and immutable heaven. A writer of imaginative prose (even more than any other sort of artist) stands confessed in his works. His conscience, his deeper sense of things, lawful and unlawful, gives him his attitude before the world. Indeed, every one who puts pen to paper for the reading of strangers (unless a moralist, who, generally speaking, has no conscience except the one he is at pains to produce for the use of others) can speak of nothing else. It is M. Anatole France, the most eloquent and just of French prose-writers, who says that we must recognise at last that, "failing the resolution to hold our peace, we can only talk of ourselves."

This remark, if I remember rightly, was made in the course of a sparring match with the late Ferdinand Brunetière over the principles and rules of literary criticism. As was fitting for a man to whom we owe the memorable saying, "The good critic is he who relates the adventures of his soul amongst master-pieces," M. Anatole France maintained that there were no rules and no principles. And that may be very true. Rules, principles, and standards die and vanish every day. Perhaps they are all dead and vanished by this time. These, if ever, are the brave, free days of destroyed landmarks, while the ingenious minds are busy inventing the forms of the new beacons which, it is consoling to think, will be set up presently in the old places. But what is interesting to a writer is the possession of an inward certitude that literary criticism will never die, for man (so variously defined) is before everything else a critical animal. And, as long as distinguished minds are ready to treat it in the spirit of high adventure, literary criticism will appeal to us with all the charm and wisdom of a well-told tale of personal experience.

For Englishmen especially, of all the races of the earth, a task, any task, undertaken in an adventurous spirit acquires the merit of romance. But the critics as a rule exhibit but little of an adventurous spirit. They take risks, of course—one can hardly live without that. The daily bread is served out to us (however sparingly) with a pinch of salt. Otherwise one would get sick

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of the diet one prays for, and that would be not only improper, but impious. From impiety of that or any other kind—save us! An ideal of reserved manner, adhered to from a sense of proprieties, from shyness, perhaps, or caution, or simply from weariness, induces, I suspect, some writers of criticism to conceal the adventurous side of their calling, and then the criticism becomes a mere “notice,” as it were the relation of a journey where nothing but the distances and the geology of a new country should be set down, the glimpses of strange beasts, the dangers of flood and field, the hair’s-breadth escapes, and the sufferings (oh, the sufferings too! I have no doubt of the sufferings) of the traveller being carefully kept out, no shady spot, no fruitful plant being ever mentioned either, so that the whole performance looks like a mere feat of agility on the part of a trained pen running in a desert. A cruel spectacle—a most deplorable adventure. “Life,” in the words of an immortal thinker of, I should say, bucolic origin, but whose perishable name is lost to the worship of posterity—“life is not all beer and skittles.” Neither is the writing of novels. It isn’t really. *Je vous donne ma parole d’honneur* that it—is—not. Not *all*. I am thus emphatic because some years ago, I remember, the daughter of a general . . .

Sudden revelations of the profane world must have come now and then to hermits in their cells, to the cloistered monks, of middle ages, to lonely sages, men of science, reformers, the revelations of a world’s superficial judgment, shocking to the souls concentrated upon their own bitter labour in the cause of sanctity, or of knowledge, or of temperance, let us say, or of art, if only the art of cracking jokes or playing the flute. And thus this general’s daughter came to me—or I should say one of the general’s daughters did. There were three of these bachelor ladies, of nicely graduated ages, who held a neighbouring farmhouse in a united and more or less military occupation. The eldest warred against the decay of manners in the village children, and executed frontal attacks upon the village mothers for the conquest of curtseys. It sounds futile, but it was really a war for an idea. The second skirmished and scouted all over the country; and it was that one who pushed a reconnaissance right to my very table—I mean the one who wore stand-up collars. She was really calling upon my wife (who does not wear stand-up collars), in the soft spirit of afternoon friendliness, but with her usual martial determination. She marched into my room swinging her stick . . . but no—I mustn’t exaggerate. It is not my speciality. I am not a humouristic writer. In all

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soberness, then, all I am certain of is that she had a stick to swing.

No ditch or wall encompassed my abode. The window was open ; the door too stood open to that best friend of my work, the warm, still sunshine of the wide fields. They lay around me infinitely helpful, but truth to say I had not known for weeks whether the sun shone upon the earth and the stars above still moved on their appointed courses. I was just then giving up some days of my allotted span to the last chapters of the novel " Nostromo," a tale of an imaginary (but true) seaboard, which is still mentioned now and again, and indeed kindly, sometimes in connection with the word " failure " and sometimes in conjunction with the word " astonishing." I have no opinion on this discrepancy. It's the sort of difference that can never be settled. All I know is that, for twenty months, neglecting the common joys of life that fall to the lot of the humblest man on this earth, I had, like the prophet of old, " wrestled with the Lord " for my creation, for the headlands of the coast, for the darkness of the Placid Gulf, the light on the snows, the clouds on the sky, and for the breath of life that had to be blown into the shapes of men and women, of Latin and Saxon, of Jew and Gentile. These are, perhaps, strong words, but it is difficult to characterise otherwise the intimacy and the strain of a creative effort in which mind and will and conscience are engaged to the full, hour after hour, day after day, away from the world, and to the exclusion of all that makes life really lovable and gentle—something for which a material parallel can only be found in the everlasting sombre stress of the westward winter passage round Cape Horn. For that last too is the wrestling of men with the might of their Creator, in a great isolation from the world, without the amenities and consolations of life, a lonely struggle under a sense of overmatched littleness, for no reward that could be adequate, but for the mere winning of a longitude. Yet a certain longitude, once won, cannot be disputed. The sun and the stars and the shape of your earth are the witnesses of your gain ; whereas a handful of pages, no matter how much you have made them your own, are at best but an obscure and questionable spoil. Here they are. " Failure "—" Astonishing " : take your choice ; or perhaps both, or neither—a mere rustle and flutter of pieces of paper settling down in the night, and undistinguishable, like the snowflakes of a great drift destined to melt away in sunshine.

" How do you do ? "

It was the greeting of the general's daughter. I had heard

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nothing—no rustle, no footsteps. I had felt only a moment before a sort of premonition of evil; I had the sense of an inauspicious presence—just that much warning and no more; and then came the sound of the voice and the jar as of a terrible fall from a great height—a fall, let us say, from the highest of the clouds floating in gentle procession over the fields in the faint westerly air of that July afternoon. I picked myself up quickly, of course; in other words, I jumped up from my chair stunned and dazed, every nerve quivering with the pain of being uprooted out of one world and flung down into another—perfectly civil.

“Oh! How do you do? Won’t you sit down?”

That’s what I said. This horrible but, I assure you, perfectly true reminiscence tells you more than a whole volume of confessions *à la* Jean Jacques Rousseau would do. Observe! I didn’t howl at her, or start upsetting furniture, or throw myself on the floor and kick, or allow myself to hint in any other way at the appalling magnitude of the disaster. The whole world of Costaguana (the country, you may remember, of my seaboard tale), men, women, headlands, houses, mountains, town, *campo* (there was not a single brick, stone, or grain of sand of its soil I had not placed in position with my own hands); all the history, geography, politics, finance; the wealth of Charles Gould’s silver-mine, and the splendour of the magnificent Capataz de Cargadores, whose name, cried out in the night (Dr. Monygham heard it pass over his head—in Linda Viola’s voice), dominated even after death the dark gulf containing his conquests of treasure and love—all that had come down crashing about my ears. I felt I could never pick up the pieces—and in that very moment I was saying, “Won’t you sit down?”

The sea is strong medicine. Behold what the quarter-deck training even in a merchant ship will do! This episode should give you a new view of the English and Scots seamen (a much-caricatured folk) who had the last say in the formation of my character. One is nothing if not modest, but in this disaster I think I have done some honour to their simple teaching. “Won’t you sit down?” Very fair; very fair indeed. She sat down. Her amused glance strayed all over the room. There were pages of MS. on the table, and under the table, a batch of typed copy on a chair, single leaves had fluttered away into distant corners; there were there living pages, pages scored and wounded, dead pages that would be burned at the end of the day—the litter of a cruel battlefield, of a long, long and desperate fray. Long! I suppose I went to bed sometimes, and got up the same number of times. Yes, I suppose I slept, and ate the food put before me,

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and talked connectedly to my household on suitable occasions. But I had never been aware of the even flow of daily life, made easy and noiseless for me by a silent, watchful, tireless affection. Indeed, it seemed to me that I had been sitting at that table surrounded by the litter of a desperate fray for days and nights on end. It seemed so, because of the intense weariness of which that interruption had made me aware—the awful disenchantment of a mind realising suddenly the futility of an enormous task, joined to a bodily fatigue such as no ordinary amount of fairly heavy physical labour could ever account for. I have carried bags of wheat on my back, bent almost double under a ship's deck-beams, from six in the morning till six in the evening (with an hour and a half off for meals), so I ought to know.

And I love letters. I am jealous of their honour and concerned for the dignity and comeliness of their service. I was, most likely, the only writer that neat lady had ever caught in the exercise of his craft, and it distressed me not to be able to remember when it was that I dressed myself last, and how. No doubt that would be all right in essentials. The fortune of the house included a pair of grey-blue watchful eyes that would see to that. But I felt somehow as grimy as a *Costaguana lepero* after a day's fighting in the streets, rumpled all over and dishevelled down to my very heels. And I am afraid I blinked stupidly. All this was bad for the honour of letters and the dignity of their service. Seen indistinctly through the dust of my collapsed universe, the good lady glanced about the room with a slightly amused serenity. And she was smiling. What on earth was she smiling at? She remarked casually:

“I am afraid I interrupted you.”

“Not at all.”

She accepted the denial in perfect good faith. And it was strictly true. Interrupted—indeed! She had robbed me of at least twenty lives, each infinitely more poignant and real than her own, because informed with passion, possessed of convictions, involved in great affairs created out of my own substance for an anxiously meditated end.

She remained silent for a while, then said with a last glance all round at the litter of the fray:

“And you sit like this here writing your—your . . .”

“I—what? Oh, yes! I sit here all day.”

“It must be perfectly delightful.”

I suppose that, being no longer very young, I might have been on the verge of having a stroke; but she had left her dog in the porch, and my boy's dog, patrolling the field in front, had

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espied him from afar. He came on straight and swift like a cannon-ball, and the noise of the fight, which burst suddenly upon our ears, was more than enough to scare away a fit of apoplexy. We went out hastily and separated the gallant animals. Afterwards I told the lady where she would find my wife—just round the corner, under the trees. She nodded and went off with her dog, leaving me appalled before the death and devastation she had lightly made—and with the awfully instructive sound of the word “delightful” lingering in my ears.

Nevertheless, later on, I duly escorted her to the field gate. I wanted to be civil, of course (what are twenty lives in a mere novel that one should be rude to a lady on their account?), but mainly, to adopt the good sound Ollendorffian style, because I did not want the dog of the general's daughter to fight again (*encore*) with the faithful dog of my infant son (*mon petit garçon*).—Was I afraid that the dog of the general's daughter would be able to overcome (*vaincre*) the dog of my child?—No, I was not afraid. . . . But away with the Ollendorff style. However appropriate and seemingly unavoidable when I touch upon anything appertaining to the lady, it is most unsuitable to the origin, character, and history of the dog; for the dog was the gift to the child from a man for whom words had anything but an Ollendorffian value, a man almost childlike in the impulsive movements of his untutored genius, the most single-minded of verbal impressionists, using his great gifts of straight feeling and right expression with a fine sincerity and a strong if, perhaps, not fully conscious conviction. His art did not obtain, I fear, all the credit its unsophisticated inspiration deserved. I am alluding to the late Stephen Crane, the author of “The Red Badge of Courage,” a work of imagination which found its short moment of celebrity in the last decade of the departed century. Other books followed. Not many. He had not the time. It was an individual and complete talent, which obtained but a grudging, somewhat supercilious recognition from the world at large. For himself one hesitates to regret his early death. Like one of the men in his “Open Boat,” one felt that he was of those whom fate seldom allows to make a safe landing after much toil and bitterness at the oar. I confess to an abiding affection for that energetic, slight, fragile, intensely living and transient figure. He liked me even before we met on the strength of a page or two of my writing, and after we met I am glad to think he liked me still. He used to point out to me with great earnestness, and even with some severity, that “a boy *ought* to have a dog.” I suspect that he was shocked at my neglect

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of parental duties. Ultimately it was he who provided the dog. Shortly afterwards, one day, after playing with the child on the rug for an hour or so with the most intense absorption, he raised his head and declared firmly : " I shall teach your boy to ride." That was not to be. He was not given the time.

But here is the dog—an old dog now. Broad and low on his bandy paws, with a black head on a white body and a ridiculous black spot at the other end of him, he provokes, when he walks abroad, smiles not altogether unkind. Grotesque and engaging in the whole of his appearance, his usual attitudes are meek, but his temperament discloses itself unexpectedly pugnacious in the presence of his kind. As he lies in the firelight, his head well up, and a fixed, far-away gaze directed at the shadows of the room, he achieves a striking nobility of pose in the calm consciousness of an unstained life. He has brought up one baby, and now, after seeing his first charge off to school, he is bringing up another with the same conscientious devotion, but with a more deliberate gravity of manner, the sign of greater wisdom and riper experience, but also of rheumatism, I fear. From the morning bath to the evening ceremonies of the cot you attend, old friend, the little two-legged creature of your adoption, being yourself treated in the exercise of your duties with every possible regard, with infinite consideration, by every person in the house—even as I myself am treated ; only you deserve it more. 'The general's daughter would tell you that it must be " perfectly delightful."

Aha ! old dog. She has never heard you yelp with acute pain (it's that poor left ear) the while, with incredible self-command, you preserve a rigid immobility for fear of overturning the little two-legged creature. She has never seen your resigned smile while the little two-legged creature, interrogated sternly, " What are you doing to the good dog ? " answers with a wide, innocent stare : " Nothing. Only loving him, mama dear ! "

The general's daughter does not know the secret terms of self-imposed tasks, good dog, the pain that may lurk in the very rewards of rigid self-command. But we have lived together many years. We have grown older, too ; and though our work is not quite done yet we may indulge now and then in a little introspection before the fire—meditate on the art of bringing up babies and on the perfect delight of writing tales where so many lives come and go at the cost of one which slips imperceptibly away.

(To be continued)

The Nature of a Crime

By Ignatz von Aschendorf

I.

You are, I suppose, by now in Rome. It is very curious how present to me are both Rome and yourself. There is a certain hill—you, and that is the curious part of it, will never go there—yet, yesterday, late in the evening, I stood upon its summit and you came walking from a place below. It is always midday there: the seven pillars of the Forum stand on high, their capitals are linked together and form one angle of a square. At their bases there lie some detritus, a broken marble lion and, I think but I am not certain, the bronze she-wolf suckling two bronze children. Your dress brushed the herbs: it was grey and tenuous: I suppose you do not know how you look when you are unconscious of being looked at? But I looked at you for a long time—at my You . . .

I saw your husband yesterday at the club and he said that you would not be returning till the end of April. When I got back to my chambers I found a certain letter. I will tell you about it afterwards—but I forbid you to look at the end of what I am writing now. There is a piece of news coming: I would break it to you if I could—but there is no way of breaking the utterly unexpected. Only, if you read this through you will gather from the tenor, from the tone of my thoughts, a little inkling, a small preparation for my disclosure. Yes: it is a “disclosure.” . . . Briefly then, it was this letter—a business letter—that set me thinking: that made that hill rise up before me. Yes: I stood upon it and there before me lay Rome—beneath a haze, in the immense sea of plains. I have often thought of going to Rome—of going with you, in a leisurely autumn of your life and mine. Now—since I have received that letter—I know that I shall never see any other Rome than that from an imagined hill-top. And when, in the wonderful light and shadelessness of that noon, last evening, you came from a grove of silver poplars, I looked at you—*my* you—for a very

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long while. You had, I think, a parasol behind your head, you moved slowly, you looked up at the capitals of those seven pillars. . . . And I thought that I should never—since you will not return before the end of April—never see you again. I shall never see again the you that every other man sees. . . .

You understand everything so well that already you must understand the nature of my disclosure. It is, of course, no disclosure to tell you that I love you. And now it is no longer a “crime” to tell you I love you. A very great reverence is due to youth—and a very great latitude is due to the dead. For I am dead : I have only lived through you for how many years now ! And I shall never speak with you again. Some sort of burial will have been given to me before the end of April. I am a spirit. I have ended my relations with the world. I have balanced all my books, my will is made. Only I have nothing to leave—save to you, to whom I leave all that is now mine in the world—my memory.

It is very curious—the world now. I walked slowly down here from Gordon Square. I walked slowly—for all my work is done. On the way I met Graydon Bankes the K.C. It would have astonished him if he could have known how unreal he looked to me. He is six feet high, and upon his left cheek there is a brown mole. I found it difficult to imagine *why* he existed. And all sorts of mists hurried past him. It was just outside the Natural History Museum. He said that his Seaford Railway Bill would come before Committee in June. And I wondered : what *is* June ? . . . I laughed and thought : why June will never come !

June will never come. Imagine that for a moment. We have discussed the ethics of suicide. You see why June will never come !

You remember that ring I always wear ? The one with a curious, bulging, greenish stone. Once or twice you have asked me what stone it was. You thought, I know, that it was in bad taste and I told you I wore it for the sake of associations. I know you thought—but no : there has never been any woman but you.

You must have felt a long time ago that there was not, that there could not have been another woman. The associations of the ring are not with the past of a finished affection, or hate, or passion, to all these forms of unrest that have a term in life : they looked forward to where there is no end—whether there is rest in it God alone knows. If it were not bad taste to use big words in extremities I would say there was Eternity in the

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ring—Eternity which is the negation of all that is accomplished in time. There was in that ring the negation of all that life may contain of losses and disappointments. Perhaps you have noticed that there was one note in our confidence that never responded to your touch. It was that note of universal negation contained within the glass film of the ring. It is not you who brought the ring into my life : I had it made years ago. It was in my nature always to anticipate a touch on my shoulder, to which the only answer could be an act of defiance. And the ring is my weapon. I shall raise it to my teeth, bite through the glass : inside there is poison.

I haven't concealed anything from you. Have I ? And, with the great wisdom for which I love you, you have tolerated these other things. You would have tolerated this too, you who have met so many sinners and have never sinned. . . .

Ah, my dear one—that is why I have so loved you. From our two poles we have met upon one common ground of scepticism—so that I am not certain whether it was you or I who first said : “ Believe nothing : be harsh to no one.” But at least we have suffered. One does not drag around with one such a cannon-ball as I have done for all these years without thinking some wise thoughts. And well I know that in your dreary and terrible life you have gained your great wisdom. You have been envied ; you too have thought : Is any prospect fair to those amongst its trees ? And I have been envied for my gifts, for my talents, for my wealth, for my official position, for the letters after my name, for my great and empty house, for my taste in pictures—for my . . . for my opportunities.

Great criminals and the very patient learn one common lesson : Believe in nothing, be harsh to no one !

But you cannot understand how immensely leisurely I feel. It is one o'clock at night. I cannot possibly be arrested before eleven to-morrow morning. I have ten hours in which, without the shadow of a doubt, I can write to you : I can put down my thoughts desultorily and lazily. I have half a score of hours in which to speak to you.

The stress of every secret emotion makes for sincerity in the end. Silence is like a dam. When the flood is at its highest the dam gives way. I am not conceited enough to think that I can sweep you along, terrified, in the rush of my confidences. I have not the elemental force. Perhaps it is just that form of “ greatness ” that I have lacked all my life—that profound quality which the Italians call *terribilita*. There is nothing overpowering or terrible in the confession of a love too great

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to be kept within bounds of the banality which is the safeguard of our daily life. Men have been nerved to crime for the sake of a love that was theirs. The call of every great passion is to unlawfulness. But your love was not mine, and my love for you was vitiated by that conventional reverence which, as to nine parts in ten, is genuine, but as to the last tenth a solemn sham behind which hide all the timidities of a humanity no longer in its youth. I have been of my time—altogether of my time—lacking courage for a swoop, as a bird respects a ragged and nerveless scarecrow. Altogether a man of my time. Observe, I do not say “our time.” You are of all time—you are the loved Woman of the first cry that broke the silence and of the last song that shall mark the end of this ingenious world to whom love and suffering have been given, but which has in the course of ages invented for itself all the virtues and all the crimes. And being of this world and of my time I have set myself to deal ingeniously with my suffering and my love.

Now everything is over—even regrets. Nothing remains of finite things but a few days of life and my confession to make to you—to you alone of all the world.

It is difficult. How am I to begin? Would you believe it—every time I left your presence it was with the desire, with the necessity, to forget you. Would you believe it?

This is the great secret—the heart of my confession. “The distance did not count. No walls could make me safe. No solitude could defend me; and having no faith in the consolations of eternity I suffered too cruelly from your absence.

If there had been kingdoms to conquer, a crusade to preach—but no. I should not have had the courage to go beyond the sound of your voice. You might have called to me any time! You never did. Never. And now it is too late. Moreover, I am a man of my time, the time not of great deeds but of colossal speculations. The moments when I was not with you had to be got through somehow. I dared not face them empty-handed lest from sheer distress I should go mad and begin to execrate you. Action? What form of action could remove me far enough from you whose every thought was referred to your existence. And as you were to me a soul of truth and serenity I tried to forget you in lies and excitement. My only refuge from the tyranny of my desire was in abasement. Perhaps I was mad. I gambled. I gambled first with my own money and then with money that was not mine. You know my connection with the great Burden fortune. I was trustee under my friend’s, Alexander Burden’s, will. I gambled with a determined

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recklessness, with closed eyes. You understand now the origin of my houses, of my collections, of my reputation, of my taste for magnificence—which you deigned sometimes to mock indulgently with an exquisite flattery as at something not quite worthy of me. It was like a break-neck ride on a wild horse, and now the fall has come. It was sudden. I am alive yet, but my back is broken. Edward Burden is going to be married. I must pay back what I have borrowed from the Trust. I cannot. Therefore I am dead. (A mouse has just come out from beneath one of the deed-boxes. It looks up at me. It may have been eating some of the papers in the large cupboard. To-morrow morning I shall tell Saunders to get a cat. I have never seen a mouse here before. I have never been so late here before. At times of pressure, as you know, I have always taken my papers home. So that those late hours have been, as it were, the prerogative of the mouse. No. I shall not get a cat. To that extent I am still a part of the world: I am master of the fate of mice!) I have, then, ten hours, less the time it has taken me to chronicle the mouse, in which to talk to you. It is strange, when I look back on it, that in all the years we have known each other—seven years, three months and two days—I have never had so long as ten hours in which I might talk to you. The longest time was when we came back from Paris together, when your husband was in such a state that he could neither see nor hear. (I've seen him, by-the-by, every day since you have been gone. He's really keeping away from it wonderfully well; in fact, I should say that he has not once actually succumbed. I fancy, really, that your absence is good for him in a way: it creates a new set of circumstances, and a change is said to be an excellent aid in the breaking of a habit. He has, I mean, to occupy himself with some of the things, innumerable as they are, that you do for him. I find that he has even had his pass-book from the bank and has compared it with his counterfoils. I haven't, on account of this improvement, yet been round to his chemist's. But I shall certainly tell them that they *must* surreptitiously decrease the strength of it.) That was the longest time we ever really talked together. And, when I think that in all these years I haven't once so much as held your hand for a moment longer than the strictest of etiquettes demanded! And I loved you within the first month. . . .

I wonder why that is. Fancy perhaps. Habit perhaps—a kind of idealism, a kind of delicacy, a fastidiousness. As you know very well it is not on account of any moral scruples. . . .

I break off to look through what I have already written to

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you. There is, first, the question of why I have never told you my secret : then, the question of what my secret really is ; I have started so many questions and have not followed one of them out to the very end. But all questions resolve themselves into the one question of our dear and inestimable relationship.

I think it has been one of the great charms of our relationship that all our talks have been just talks. We have discussed everything under the sun, but we have never discussed anything *à fond*. We have strayed into all sorts of byways and have never got anywhere. I try to remember how many evenings in the last five years we have not spent together. I think they must be less than a hundred in number. You know how, occasionally, your husband would wake out of his stupors—or walk *in* his stupor and deliver one of his astonishingly brilliant disquisitions. But remember how, always, whether he talked of free love or the improvement in the breed of carriage-horses, how he always thrashed his subject out to the bitter end. It was not living with a man : it was assisting at a performance. And, when he was sunk into his drugs or when he was merely literary, or when he was away, how lazily we talked. I think no two minds were ever so fitted one into another as yours and mine. It is not of course that we agree on all subjects—or perhaps upon any. In the whole matter of conduct we are so absolutely different—you are always for circumspection, for a careful preparation of the ground, for patience ; and I am always ready to act, and afterwards to draw a moral from my actions. But somehow in the end, it has always worked out in our being in agreement. Later I will tell you why that is.

Let me return to my mouse. For you will observe that the whole question revolves, really, around that little allegorical mite. It is an omen : it is a symbol. It is a little herald of the Providence that I do not believe in—of the Providence you so very implicitly seek to obey. For instinctively you believe in Providence ; in God, if you will. I as instinctively disbelieve. Intellectually of course you disbelieve in a God. You say that it is impossible for Reason to accept an Overlord ; I that Reason forces one to believe in an Omnipotent Ruler—only I am unable to believe. We, my dear, are in ourselves evidence of a design in creation. For we are the last words of creation. It has taken all the efforts, all the birth-pangs of all the ages to evolve us—you and me. And, being evolved, we are intellectually so perfectly and so divinely fashioned to dovetail together. And, physically too, are we not divinely meant the one for the other ? Do we not react to the same causes : should not we survive the

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same hardships or succumb to the same stresses? Since you have been away I have gone looking for people—men, women, children, even animals—that could hold my attention for a minute. There has not been one. And what purer evidence of design could you ask for than that?

I have made this pact with the Providence that I argue for—with the Providence in whose existence I cannot believe—that if, from under the castle of black metal boxes, the mouse reappear and challenge death—then there is no future state. And, since I can find no expression save in you, if we are not reunited I shall no longer exist. So my mouse is the sign, the arbitrament, a symbol of an eternal life or the herald of nothingness.

I will make to you the confession that since this fancy, this profound truth, has entered my mind, I have not raised my eyes from the paper. I dread—I suppose it is dread—to look across the ring of light that my lamp casts. But now I will do so. I will let my eyes travel across the bundles of dusty papers on my desk. Do you know I have left them just as they were on the day when you came to ask me to take your railway tickets? I will let my eyes travel across that rampart of blue and white docketts. . . . The mouse is not there.

But that is not the end of it. I am not a man to be ungenerous in my dealings with the Omnipotent: I snatch no verdict.

II.

Last night it was very late and I grew tired, so I broke off my letter. Perhaps I was really afraid of seeing that mouse again. Those minute superstitions are curious things. I notice when I looked at the enumeration of these pages to-night I begin to write upon the thirteenth sheet—and that gives me a vague dissatisfaction. I read, by-the-by, a paragraph in a newspaper: it dealt with half-mad authors. One of these, the writer said, was Zola; he was stated to be half-mad because he added together the numbers on the backs of cabs passing him in the street. Personally, I do that again and again—and I know very well that I do it in order to dull my mind. It is a sort of narcotic. Johnson, we know, touched his street-posts in a certain order: that, too, was to escape from miserable thoughts. And we all know how, as children, we have obeyed mysterious promptings to step upon the lines between the paving-stones in the streets. . . . But the children have their futures: it is

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well that they should propitiate the mysterious Omnipotent One. In their days, too, Johnson and Zola had their futures. It was well that Johnson should "touch" against the evil chance; that Zola should rest his mind against new problems. In me it is a mere imbecility. For I have no future.

Do you find it difficult to believe that? You know the Burdens, of course. But I think you do not know that for the last nine years I have administered the Burden estates all by myself. The original trustees were old Lady Burden and I; but nine years ago Lady Burden gave me a power of attorney and since then I have acted alone. It was just before then that I had bought the houses in Gordon Square—the one I live in, the one you live in, and the seven others. Well, rightly speaking, those houses have been bought with Burden money, and all my pictures, all my prints, all my books, my furniture—my reputation as a connoisseur, my governorships of the two charities—all the me that people envy have been bought with the Burden money. I assure you that at times I have found it a pleasurable excitement. . . . You see, I have wanted you sometimes so terribly—so terribly that the juggling with the Burden accounts has been as engrossing a narcotic as to Zola was the adding up of the numbers upon the backs of cabs. Mere ordinary work would never have held my thoughts.

Under old Burden's will young Edward Burden comes of age when he reaches the age of twenty-five or when he marries with my consent. Well, he will reach the age of twenty-five and he will marry on April 5. On that day the solicitors of his future wife will make their scrutiny of my accounts. It is regarded, you understand, as a mere formality. But it amuses me to think of the faces of Coke and Coke when they come to certain figures! It was an outlaw of some sort, was it not, who danced and sang beneath the gallows? I wonder, now, what sort of traitor, outlaw, or stealthy politician I should have made in the Middle Ages. It is certain that, save for this one particular of property, I should be in very truth illustrious. No doubt the state shall come at last in which there shall no more be any property. I was born before my time.

For it is certain that I am illustrious in everything but in that one respect. To-day young Edward Burden came here to the office to introduce to me his *fiancée*. You observe that I have robbed her. The Burden property is really crippled. They came, this bright young couple, to get a cheque from me with which to purchase a motor-car. They are to try several cars in the next three weeks. On the day before the wedding

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they are to choose one that will suit them best—and on the wedding-day in the evening they are to start for Italy. They will be coming towards you. . . . Then no doubt, too, a telegram will reach them, to say that in all probability motor-cars will be things not for them for several years to come. What a crumbling of their lives !

It was odd how I felt towards *her*. You know his pompous, high forehead, the shine all over him, the grave, weighty manner. He held his hat—a wonderfully shiny, “good” hat—before his mouth, for all the world as if he had been in church. He made even a speech in introducing Miss Averies to me. You see, in a sense, he *was* in a temple. My office enshrines a Deity, a divinity : the law, property, the rights of man as maintained by an august constitution. I am for him such a wonderfully “safe” man. My dear one, you cannot imagine how I feel towards him : a little like a deity, a little like an avenging Providence. I imagine that the real Deity must feel towards some of His worshippers much as I feel towards this phoenix of the divines.

(To be continued)

The Holy Mountain

By Stephen Reynolds

(AUTHOR OF "A POOR MAN'S HOUSE")

If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place ; and it shall remove ; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.—ST. MATTHEW.

If the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise.—BLAKE.

There's many a true word spoken in jest.

BOOK I.

I.

SHOULD you, after an absence, return to Trowbury, Wilts, your health will be inquired after ; you will be questioned, as to your time of coming and going, your business in the old town, and particularly as to your private affairs ; and lastly you will be asked, " Well, you don't find Trowbury much altered, do you ? " To this you should reply, " No, not a bit ! " and blame the railway company. Then you may make a move in the direction of the Blue Boar, that modernised coaching inn which is called " The Antient Hostelry " by local newspapers, and gives an air of prosperous age to at least one corner of the Market Square.

Enter and drink to the health of your inquisitive friend. Drink up, dear sir ! Another Scotch and soda ? And another to the welfare of Trowbury. Say you love the dear old place ; or that Trowbury is going to the dogs. It is all the same. Trowbury is Trowbury—the small old market town on a slope of the Wiltshire Downs, with the bare windy hills above it and good fat hedged-in grazing lands below. It does not increase ; neither does it greatly diminish. It spends a vast amount of time and speech, and a certain amount of energy, in standing quite still. It takes its pride in the fact that, if it has never been better than it is, it has certainly never been worse. Not every

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man, nor every town, can hold his or its own by standing still. Enviably little town ! whose rates would be twenty shillings in the pound but for the tongues that must wag before a penny's spending ; whose dull sins suffice to provide the clergy and the police with salaries ; whose wit is the handmaiden of gossip ; whose brain is as peaceful as a standing pool ; whose civic motto might be *Semper Eadem !*

And one glass more, my dear sir, to Trowbury society, to the Castle which belongs to strangers ; to the County which is great and takes care to live outside the town ; to the Fringers—families not quite County, professional and semi-professional people, and tradesmen with offices instead of shops—who may touch the hem of the County's garments at charities, bazaars and the like, and whose social position is a wee babe, born too early, that cries for careful nursing ; to the upper tradesfolk, aldermen, councillors, burgesses and busybodies, good-livers all, who have money, respectability or push, and for the most part frequent the bar of the Blue Boar ; to the lower tradesfolk who sit in shilling seats and dress amazingly on Sundays ; to workmen sober and workmen drunken ; to servants virtuous and servants not ; to those poor sportsmen who are called poachers, and to all who make use of the workhouse, the asylum or the gaol—GOOD HEALTH ! For of such is the town of Trowbury, and the devil may care which is the best and the worst of them !

II.

About the middle of the right hand side of Castle Street—the straight narrow thoroughfare on either side of which the upper tradesfolk have their shops, and many of them their dwellings and gardens too—there used to be a somewhat gaudy shop, fitted into the basement of a sombre freestone house, across which was painted in large red letters picked out with gold :

JAMES TROTMAN, THE FAMOUS GROCER.

Established 1889.

TRY OUR FAMOUS BLEND OF FAMILY TEA.

Here, early on a Monday in July, was enacted a series of little scenes which might have been providentially arranged for reproduction on paper bags. A servant in a sluttish print dress, with untidy hair and cap awry, stood for some minutes at the

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side door talking to the milkman. She put his tie straight (with an eye on another man who was sweeping the odds and ends of the shop across the pavement), heard a voice, took up her jug, and hastened inside to the kitchen. Four rather pinched young women in dowdy black raiment came chattering up the street, passed through the side door, and banged it. Another young woman, Starkey by name, more lissom in figure, better in looks and nattier in dress, hurried up the street from the other end, and likewise disappeared into the Famous Grocery Establishment. It seemed as if the place and the people had clockwork inside them. Not without many odd jerks and wrinklins did the broad blue blinds of the shop go up. The four young women, all of them greatly smartened by the addition of white aprons and oversleeves, bustled about between the counters. Miss Starkey took her place in a glass box labelled CASH. A hatless child, carrying a pair of bloaters under one arm and a loaf under the other, bought half a pound of castor sugar and a penn'orth of adulterated pepper. The day's business began.

Within the house also, the day commenced in a similarly mechanical fashion. In a sitting-room, one door of which opened into the passage, another into the kitchen and another into the shop, the servant, behindhand on account of her talk with the milkman, was throwing breakfast things upon the table. It was a dingy room. Not all the frivolous importations of Mrs. Trotman—bits of art muslin, photogravures, painted dicky-birds, bamboo letter-racks and so forth—could do much to relieve its dulness. It smelled of stale tobacco smoke (bad cigars) and of a dirty carpet. Even the morning light that came in through a French window, mud-splashed from the flower-bed outside, was stale and spiritless.

The clock was stopped; but at 8.15 or thereabout Alderman James Trotman, Mayor of Trowbury, slowly descended the stairs, whistling the air of an old song called *The Honeysuckle and the Bee*. He walked into the sitting-room, monarch of all he surveyed. Although a peep through the window of the door leading to the shop appeared to be not unsatisfactory, it was at the same time very plain that he had got out of bed the wrong side, or, as was more likely, had got into it the wrong way. For he belonged to that fraternity of lugubrious toppers, which discusses things in general and its neighbours in particular every evening at the Blue Boar; a coterie which is familiarly and justly known as the *Blue Bores*. He now walked delicately round the room, balancing himself the fraction of a second on the ball of each foot. His glance at the breakfast table might

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equally have meant, "What can I do for you, ma'm?" or, "Why isn't breakfast ready? What have you got?" Both no doubt were simply a part of his daily routine. At all events, the gravy splashes on the tablecloth encircled no dish of bacon. Alderman Trotman pulled down the bell deliberately, let it spring back with a snap and a jangle, and resumed his promenade around the breakfast table. His none too healthy countenance, however, looked fairly contented.

He was in no sense an extraordinary man, and would indeed have repudiated any suggestion to that effect, unless some very complimentary intent were quite obvious. He liked to call himself *A man in the street*, meaning by *street* of course Bond Street or Piccadilly; not Castle Street, Trowbury. His house of many mansions was most emphatically London. The reason why his fellow townsmen had made him mayor was, that it was his turn. His greatest practical ambitions were, to get on in life—to make money that is,—and to be a local celebrity as cheaply and with as much advertisement to his business as possible. At this time, he had no idea of becoming a world-celebrity. He was forty-five years, one month and some days old; of middling height and middling stoutness; middling altogether. His appearance—sloppy clothes, a dirty collar and trodden-over carpet slippers—was absolutely normal, except that his face, which had in repose a gloomy cast, mainly on account of biliousness and a drooping moustache, was rather paler than usual. In his own house he was known for a manageable, if bothersome, tyrant: in municipal affairs, as 'Mendment Trotman. He placed few motions in the *agenda* of the borough council, but with never-failing eloquence he amended, or tried to amend, every one else's proposals for the good of the dear old town. In his own opinion, and also in the judgment of thoughtful people, his two originalities were, first, that he called himself *The Famous Grocer*, and secondly, that, finding young women assistants (who lived out) far less expensive than men, he called the young women *Female Clerks*, and employed them exclusively at his counters.

After ringing the bell a second time, he seated himself before the place where the bacon should have been. Almost immediately a thin fair woman, a few years younger than the Mayor, and peevish in expression, entered the sitting-room by the kitchen door, and seated herself before the breakfast cups. There was about her a certain air of elegance and an equally certain air of vulgarity. Her skirt was stained and with a dirty hand she fingered a golden bracelet. A pearl brooch fastened her

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crumpled collar. She was the Mayor's most very excellent wife. Her innate vulgarity suited him at home. Her elegance was useful to him abroad. He knew how to deal with her peevishness. She was tactful with his bilious irritability. Which of them was the profounder, the more jealous and earnest-minded scandalmonger, it is impossible to say; their methods were so different and their joint results so wonderful.

Without giving her husband an opportunity of inquiring after the bacon, Mrs. Trotman remarked sweetly: "It's coming in a minute if you'll wait."

"I've waited twenty minutes already," said Mr. Trotman in those sepulchral tones that he used on important occasions.

"*Do* have patience, my dear! What is that little hussy up to?"

"If at first you don't succeed . . ."

Mrs. Trotman produced a large sigh, removed her bracelet and returned to the kitchen; whence in a few moments she reappeared, followed by the servant bearing at last a dish of fried bacon.

"H'm!" began the Mayor, turning over some of the rashers with his own fork. "Drowned in fat!"

"You didn't give me time to drain each piece separately . . ."

"Where's the paper?"

"Ellen," said Mrs. Trotman with the quiet dignity of a mayoress, "the *Halfpenny Press*, please."

Ellen had gone.

"Ellen!" caterwauled the Mayoress. "The paper! Hurry up! D'you hear?"

Mr. Trotman seemed to be in a hurry. He dropped a rasher of bacon on the cloth ("*Do* be careful, dear."), filled his mouth over-full of hot tea ("There!"), spluttered upon his waistcoat ("James!"), used his handkerchief to wipe himself dry, placed his hand on the newspaper, and thus shortly addressed his wife:

"Where's Alec?"

"He's getting up."

"Sure?"

"I think he is."

"Then you're not sure. I know he isn't."

"How do *you* know?"

"He's sure not to be."

The Alderman paused, and then proceeded: "I won't have it!"

"What?"

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"His coming in late, like he did last night."

"How *can* it matter when he's leaving home so soon? He wasn't well, I think, last night, only he wouldn't say."

"It *does* matter, I tell you."

Mrs. Trotman could not succeed this time in pacifying her husband. Wound up by waiting, it was necessary for him to run down in eloquence. "Yes," he continued, "*I* knew quite well why you stayed down to open the door after I was gone to bed last night. I knew, I tell you. It's a wonder to me you aren't more ashamed of him. *I* am. I've spent pounds more than I ought to on his education. I've made the money, and you and him have bled me. I've kept him on at the technical school to learn to be a practical man, and he's neither business-like or a scholar. Can he write a decent letter? Eh? When he was chucked out of May's, and when Beecher wouldn't article him, I didn't say much . . ."

"Oh!"

"Well, I forgave him anyhow. He might have been an accountant, or an auctioneer and estate agent, by now if he'd stuck to it. There's pickings in both and *I* could have put some business in his way. In all the world there's nothing worse than a waster. Look at your brother!"

Mrs. Trotman coloured up at the reference to her ne'er-do-well brother, and submitted an assortment of her stock arguments in favour of her son. "You know Alec left Beecher's because his chest couldn't stand the outdoor work. He never wanted to go there. And perhaps if you'd paid the premium, instead of trying to do it cheap by getting him in on trial, perhaps he'd have been there now. And he never did have any head for figures . . ."

"Then he ought to have a head! What did I send him to school for? Eh? I can't have him in my own establishment . . ."

"He shan't while his mother's alive!"

"—and look after him myself. He's not smart enough for me. Only last week he told Mrs. Marteene that *he* thought China Tea more digestible than the Famous Blend. The Rev. Marteene told me so himself—congratulated me on such a thoughtful son! He hadn't the head, of course, to reckon out that there's twice as much profit on the Famous. We'll see what he'll do in London—the proper place, that, for business experience. Grocer's assistants learn to be smart there. Else they starve. If I'd stayed in Trowbury, what should I be? A very different business man to what I am, as you very well know.

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If Alec thought he was going to stop about here and dangle after that yellow girl at Turner's, he was trying the game on the wrong man. Besides, he's much too familiar with the girls in the shop. That Miss Starkey . . ."

"Oh, I'm sure he isn't. That woman! You know he's not."

"Oh well, I'm not so sure.—Are you getting his things ready? It's Monday now, and we start Thursday; and no putting it off, mind. Go'n see if he's getting up and tell him his father wants to speak to him—immediately!"

Mr. Trotman had dragged the teapot towards him, had re-filled his cup, and was just going to open the newspaper, when his wife returned, saying: "He's got up early and gone bathing. I hope he won't catch cold . . ."

"Do him good!" snapped his father. "He'll go to town just the same next Thursday, anyhow."

The Alderman's eloquence had nearly worked itself out. He took another piece of bread, and Mrs. Trotman judged that a counter-attraction or diversion, a little savoury, which is to say a tit-bit of scandal, would be timely. "D'you remember saying last week, James, that Mr. Clinch's affairs are in a mess?"

"Well?"

"I saw Mrs. Clinch last night in the butcher's. She looked awfully pale and worried."

"Clinch still up in Town?"

"When I asked her, she turned the conversation."

"H'm! Daresay I shall see him at one of the halls when I go up with Alec. He's not supposed to go to Town strictly on business always."

"Don't take Alec to those music-halls, James."

"Why not? D'you want me to sit with him all the evening in the hotel smoking-room, or take him to Madame Tussaud's? They're perfectly refined; most refined entertainment if you know the ropes. In Rome do as Rome does, is *my* motto."

"But you don't think that John Clinch is—that he goes up to Town to see anybody, do you? It would break her heart."

"Don't know and don't care. Got little feet under many a man's table, I shouldn't wonder. That sort. Anyhow, I'll find out. Trust J. T."

Mr. Trotman who was now at last really opening the *Half-penny Press*, suddenly gave vent to some almost reverential

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exclamations. "Well I'm damned!" said he. "What on earth . . . Look at that!"

"James!" protested Mrs. Trotman in her most exquisitely modulated and delicately shocked voice. "What *is* the matter, my dear?"

"Look!—No, never mind. I want this paper. Get me my boots. I've got a council meeting this morning. Boots! Quick, sharp!"

Such an attentive bustle there was to prepare the master of the house for leaving it. He put on his boots, lighted a cheap morning cigar, and, taking up by mistake an old newspaper, he rushed out, not to the council chamber but to the Blue Boar bar.

His wife, acting on the valuable adage that silence is the better half of truth, did not call him back to point out his mistake. As soon as she had heard the door bang, she picked up the day's newspaper and spread it out on the top of the breakfast things.

Alec Trotman, who had come quietly into the room with a bathing towel wrapped round his neck, glanced at the open paper, looked startled, made as if to go, glanced again, and did go hurriedly.

Mrs. Trotman was left staring at the central pages of the *Halfpenny Press*, one of which was almost entirely filled up by a collection of gigantic headlines:

VOLCANIC UPHEAVAL

SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF A MOUNTAIN IN LONDON

POPULOUS DISTRICT BLOTTED OUT

IS IT THE END OF THE WORLD

WHAT THE REV. DIOGENES JAMESON SAYS

See this Evening's EVENING PRESS

Special Copyright Articles by Special Correspondents
and Authorities.

III.

To go back to the day before that on which Alderman Trotman exhibited his wit and wisdom to his wife over breakfast:

At a quarter to six on Sunday evening, three young men in top-hats and best clothes were walking up and down Trowbury

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Station Road. As the turkey-gobbler struts to and fro, feathers up, in a poultry yard, so did these smart young men march up and down the Station Road, pull their clothes into something like a fit, blow their noses, adjust their ties, twirl their sticks, puff cigarettes daintily, cast up their eyes at certain windows and strike elegant attitudes in turning. One of them placed his feet just as a dancing mistress had instructed him for waltzing. Their beats, though unequal in length, centred exactly opposite one single house, opposite Clinch's Emporium—a large drapery establishment that, taking tone from its master, is said to have given more wives to Trowbury and to have struggled more valiantly against depopulation than any other two shops in the county. Knightly vigils before cold mediæval altars placed fewer promising youths on the sick-list than did Clinch's young ladies and an east wind down the Station Road. But to-night the air was soft ; fit for butterflies or crepuscular moths. Love was abroad. He wore preposterous garments but 'twas he himself.

Before long, Clinch's side-door rattled. The three youths stopped dead in their perambulations. A couple of richly dressed, many-coloured, fuzzy and fashionable young women emerged from the Emporium—gaudy butterflies emerging from as ugly a chrysalis as might be seen. Two of the young men stepped up and appropriated them ; and to the third young man one of the young ladies said gaily : “ Good evenin', Mr. Trotman. Miss Jepp 'll be down in a mo'. She's jest puttin' on her 'at.” After which, the couples went merrily up the road, leaving Mr. Alexander Trotman to wait a little while longer, alone.

Far from a handsome or a hearty young man was Alexander Trotman. “ Sins of the fathers. . . .” you might have whispered on seeing him. Even in his country-made tailcoat—a large garment very round at the corners—he seemed pliant, loose and narrow. His pinky face was the face of a man who goes about open-mouthed, and his moustache was grown just enough to make him appear slightly unwashed. His boots looked as if they contained corns ; and they did. Peculiar to him and rather uncanny, were his light grey, steady, almost sphinx-like eyes—eyes that stared people out of countenance without his being aware of it and not infrequently made even his father uncomfortable. They suggested that, in the midst of his general weakness, there survived some strong primeval force ; a head of steam too great for the rickety engine ; an energy that, once let loose, would destroy its owner. Because his mother, till he

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was more than grown up, used to inquire all the year round at the butcher's for lamb chops, saying that Allie's stomach being what it was, he must have tender nourishing meat—he was familiarly called Chop-Allie Trotman, and his prestige in Trowbury was small. His was a flabby boyhood, neither good nor bad, useful nor ornamental ; a source of pride to his mother and of absurd hopes and mortifications to his go-ahead father. At a dance, however, when he was nearly twenty years old, and was wearing his first swallow-tails for the first time, he overheard a wag trying to make conversation with a dull girl. "Chop-Allie," said the wag, "is quite a lady-killer." That was all. But Chop-Allie took the words to heart. He decided that he was a Man, and in deciding, was so, more or less. He kept a picture of a fat half-clothed actress locked in a little wooden box. He ambled forth from boyhood with the deliberate intention of lady-killing. He saw himself flirting with them all and kissing the greater number. But the first lady he fell in with, Miss Julia Jepp of Clinch's Emporium, overcame him quite ; and instead of killing he was himself most grievously wounded.

When, at last, the said Miss Jepp came out of Clinch's, he ran forward as if he had not seen her for years, greeted her with a dissenter's handshake and snuffles of delight, and succeeded in saying : "You've come !"

"Yes, I've come. But I had to hurry, I can tell you, to get ready in time. And I saw you waiting below, poor boy !"

"Did you really ?"

"Really !"

It was perhaps not solely to prove how much she had hurried that Miss Jepp patted her ample self all over—patted and pulled her yellow silk blouse, tweaked the yellow ribbon round her neck, caressed her low-lying fringe, the yellow bow in her hat, and the dark hair that contrasted so strongly with her complexion, pale from long hours in the stuffy dusty Emporium. All this she did with her peaceful eyes resting on Alec.

"D'you think I shall do ?" she asked.

Chop-Allie was spell-bound. "Do !" he blurted out. "Where's your bike. Let *me* get it."

She lightly touched his arm (some gestures have a pathetic grace : this had) with a hand that held two Prayer Books. "I want you to come to church with me, our last evening."

They had never yet braved the eyes of a church congregation together. Alec protested that a walk or a ride would be ever so much nicer, until she added : "But we'll bike up to Nurse's

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afterwards, and go on the Hill." Then he gave way, and to church they went.

The service was not long. Alec and Julia had each other to think about. It seemed to them but a short while before the preacher went up into the pulpit and gave out as his text :

"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place ; and it shall remove : and nothing shall be impossible to you."

And it seemed but a short while, again, before the preacher's peroration, delivered under the flickering pulpit gas-lamps in tones of great conviction, caused Alec to take his eyes off Miss Jepp's left hand.

"If we had faith as a grain of mustard seed," the preacher's voice rang out, "we might say to the everlasting hills, Remove hence to yonder place ; and they should remove ; and nothing would be impossible unto us. But we have not that faith. We have little faith and little love, and therefore are we a weak-kneed generation, and all things of worth are impossible unto us, and the blest age of miracles is past and gone. Nevertheless"—here his voice was low enough and impressive enough to startle the congregation—"it is written and endures, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place ; and it shall remove ; and nothing, nothing shall be impossible to you !"

The gas-lamps in the body of the church were turned up. The congregation shuffled as if it had the pins-and-needles in its legs. The organ gave out the melody of the last hymn. What relief ! Deep breaths were taken. Alec and Julia had been so thrilled that they forgot to rise until the congregation's singing and the chink of pence in the bags brought them, too, back to everyday life. Throughout the hymn they glanced slantways at one another, and no doubt would have continued so gazing if the anxiety of the people to be out of church had not compelled them to look after their ribs and toes, instead of into each other's eyes.

How exquisitely fresh was the evening air outside !

IV.

Once on their bicycles, Alec and Julia were more at home, for cycling was more to them than worship. When Alec made the discovery that Julia Jepp who was flat-footed and walked badly looked, as he said, perfectly lovely on a bicycle, he pleased

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himself and he pleased her ; and it was his most notable advance in courtship. They rode rapidly out side by side, and soon left the strolling townsfolk behind them in that stretch of the road which is an avenue of plain and ornamental trees and also a canal of dust. None of this they noticed ; neither trees, hedges, pathways, nor mere walking couples. Only motor cars brought them back to themselves and the world. After a couple of miles they came out upon the open, white and for the most part hedgeless road that winds over the Downs, and finally they alighted at the gate of a tiny cottage with a porch and three little white-curtained windows.

“La, Master Allie ! Is it you to be sure ? Who’d ha’ thought of seein’ you out here to-night !” exclaimed the small old woman, becapped, bearded, and dressed in rusty black, who ran out to greet them. “And how be father and mother, my dear ? ’Tisn’t often I d’get into town to see ’em now.”

“Oh, they’re all right . . .”

“And you don’t mean to tell me this be your young lady do ’ee ? Well, well !”

Chop-Allie’s pleasure and confusion were about equal ; for in courtships like his there must be a good deal of walking out, and even a little kissing, before young-ladyship is more than tacitly admitted ; and his proposal of marriage, his formal wooing, was yet in solution, so to speak.

“There, come in a minute, won’t ’ee, my dears ?” the gossip lonesome old woman was saying, when Alec interrupted her with : “We’re going up on the Hill, nurse. May we leave our machines here ?”

“On course you may, my dear. Young folk sweetheartin’ don’t want old folk’s company, do ’em ? But”—turning to Miss Jepp—“you ain’t going on the Hill in that lovely silk body, and your hat and hair done nice and all, fit for a live lady in her carriage.—You’ve got a real nice pretty young lady, Master Allie ; and I should like to see her in one o’ they there pretty sunbonnets, like they used to wear when I were young, that I should.—And I think as how you’ll make him a good wife, Miss ; which I’m sure he’ll make ’ee a good husband, for I’ve a-nursed he and I’ve a-nursed his father, and fine babies they was both, though they did both have croup and bronkitties, and was delicate in their little stummicks, and was born wi’ difficulty, both. But there, they d’ say, ‘Like father like son’ ; and there’s something in it, I say.”

Alec and his sweetheart were greatly blushing now. “Well, we must get on, nurse,” he said. “See you again soon.”

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"Good night, my dears.—There, I shall see 'ee again, shan't I? I'll take care on your bicycles."

Close by the cottage they left the main road for one of the rutted tracks down which chalk is brought to the lime kilns from the quarries above. Both of them being thoughtful, disinclined to prattle, and still rather embarrassed by Mrs. Parfitt's memories and enthusiasm, they had a rare opportunity of listening to the birds and grasshoppers. And this unusual silence lasted until Miss Jepp slipped into a rut overgrown by grass and cornflowers, and tore the hem of her garment.

She lifted up her skirt nine inches, retired to the bank and handled pins as to the knack trained.

"I can't never think how ladies mend things so quick," remarked Alec, regarding Julia with lively admiring eyes. "I couldn't, I'm sure."

"You're a man. There's lots of things you can do that us women can't, you know."

"I don't know . . ."

"Men can fish and hunt and play football and cricket, and hit brutes down, and go anywhere. I wish I could."

"So do I," said Alec sadly.

"And make love . . ." Julia added.

Alexander Trotman grasped the hand of Miss Julia Jepp. Hot words flooded his mind, but unfortunately the hand was the one that held her draperies. (The other one held her pins.) Once more she trod on her skirts and tore them.

"There! Oh my!"

"I'm *so* sorry. . . ." Alec began.

"You go on, Mr. Trotman. I think it's my underskirt."

She tore the lowest flounce from her petticoat, straightened her hat, patted her hair, and rejoined Alec. Walking some two or three feet apart, they mounted the hill.

"Lovely, isn't it?" observed Miss Jepp.

"There's some air up here," replied Alec.

It is a Trowbury commonplace that the Downs—"where there's always some air going"—lend salubrity to the Town, which, to tell the truth, is fully two hundred feet below, and frequently seems to obtain its air rather from fried-fish shops than from the wind-swept Downs.

The lovers came to a stop. Shortness of breath has been the cause of much admiration of hill scenery. Miss Jepp was red in the face—not quite healthily red,—and Alec was breathing with a slight wheeze.

"It's lovely," said the former between breaths.

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"Yes—lovely!" echoed the latter.

They were right.

Away in front of them stretched the undulating sage-coloured plain, most exquisite in its gentle sharp-cut curves, and tinged on the horizon with the colours of the sky, now flushed by the approaching sunset. An ancient camp, topped by a group of weird and desolate black pines, jutted out into the vale on one side. On the other side, and also behind them, was a broad fertile valley, and in the distance a range of shining purple hills that looked no less than mountainous in the clear proportionless air. Ramshorn Hill, with its abrupt sides and its circlet of beech trees, crouched before them like a huge breathing animal. Cloud shadows glided slowly over it, and a flock of sheep, like a large flat yellow beetle, crawled down it towards one of the dew-ponds on the plain. The wind whistled through the grass stalks as if the air was wishful to caress the earth. The place was holy—a temple for some god too mighty, too impersonal, to be worshipped in temples built with hands; yet a god no mightier on earth than him the lovers were prepared to worship another way.

Said Alec, "I'm a bit blown. Shall we sit down?"

"Just a weeny bit, if you like. That's it; sit on my skirt: the grass may be damp. If I'm late the guvnor'll fine me and just about give it to me to-morrow morning."

"Oh lor! will he? Mine tries to, sometimes." Alec took out a bronzed cigarette case. "You don't mind smoke? Plenty of air up here to carry it off."

"I *won't* mind this time," answered Miss Jepp in what she imagined to be the tone and manner of real unsmoked ladies. Then she continued in her ordinary voice: "Me and Miss Loder *have* smoked out of the bedroom window once or twice. Really! But I didn't like it a bit."

"Have one now?"

"No, *no*! Really!"

"I'm going so soon . . ."

"Poor boy! And I shan't see you again—till when?"

"I don't know. Never, I shouldn't wonder. Why don't you get a berth in London? We could go to all sorts of places."

"'Twouldn't be any good. I wish I could. Really I do! You see, dear,"—she laid her hand on his arm—"in Trowbury I'm Miss Julia Jepp from the leading London houses and they think I know the Paris fashions, but in town I'd be only Julie Jepp from nowhere. 'Twas the doctor that first sent me into the country out of London because I'm delicate; and I don't want to die, do I? Not just yet . . ."

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Alec did not answer. Instead, he slid his arm round her waist—and for so doing was mightily rewarded. “Not now I know you,” she added; and she cuddled to him: cuddled him to her, would perhaps be more correct. Before long, they were half lying on the elastic but thistly sward. Alec toyed with the long watch chain around Julia’s neck. Incidentally he touched her hair, as gingerly as one touches a cat reputed to scratch and bite. However old to mankind, these simple actions were new to Alec and Julia. Speechless and sadly joyful, they thought they were thinking, until Julia sighed prodigiously and said: “I expect you are glad you are going to London—really.”

“I am, you know, in a way; and I’m not. I don’t know. I wish you could come.”

“Poor boy! One never knows one’s luck. What part did you say you were going to?”

“A place in Acton, on the Uxbridge Road, father says.”

“I know that part. I’ve been there,” said Julia, rather glad of something definite, however trivial, to talk about. “We had a young lady from there at our place in Oxford Street when I was in Town, and she got ill, and I used to go out there to see her until she died. She was my partic’lar chum, she was.”

“Oh . . . What’s it like?”

“Well, I don’t exactly know: I can’t say, that is. It’s not town and it’s not country. It’s mostly building land and new houses and cheap shops.”

“Nowhere to walk?”

“There’s some fields behind Acton.”

“Nice ones?”

“They used to make me shiver;—really they did. I always caught cold there. I used to go walks with that young lady I told you, when she was well enough, and she used to say the fields were dying like she was and the houses were the tombstones; but some of them are rather nice.”

“I wish I wasn’t going, Julia.”

The streaming red clouds had solidified, as it were, to a dense violet while the sun had been sinking below the horizon; and as the sharply-outlined gullies of Ramshorn Hill faded into the general mass of Downs and clouds, the heavens and the earth seemed to become one vast cloudland. Alec and Julia came under the spell of the Downs. They spoke reverently to one another. Their longing augmented their reverence—for what, they did not know.

“I do wish I wasn’t going,” Alec repeated. “We shan’t have any more rides or walks. I don’t want to go a bit.”

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"But you must, you've got to, dear."

"I won't! I wouldn't mind if there was a place like this in London."

"But you're going to work and get an income, and then we'll . . ."

"We shan't never climb up Ramshorn Hill any more. We shall write letters, and then we shall stop that. People always do. I've got an idea we shan't never see each other any more."

"God will take care of us," said Julia Jepp as she bent forward and kissed him on the forehead.

He was near weeping; was like a naughty boy.

"D'you remember what the clergyman said?" she asked.

"It's in the Bible: *If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye should say to that mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it should remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*"

"That's all rot."

"If ye have faith . . ."

"Julie! Julie!" cried Alec with unformulated despair.

They kissed; neither decorously on the forehead this time, nor shyly on the cheek.

They clung to each other, a little spot on the broad open Downs.

It was the moment when the hills are in perfect peace; after the day-birds have ceased twittering; before the night-birds fly. The wind was now very still.

"Julie!" cried Alec again, and again they kissed. "I wish Ramshorn Hill was near Acton. I can't go away from the Downs. I won't. I want them, Julie."

He raised himself a little, and peered as it were violently into the darkening scene, without speaking.

The Downs trembled.

"What's that?" said Julia in a whisper.

A puff of cool air struck them. A corncrake gave a rasping screech behind them.

"Only a corncrake . . ."

"No, that!"

Julia scrambled to her knees.

"Look!"

Alec stood up too. He shuddered.

Where Ramshorn Hill had been, there was a large white patch and something like a hollow. They could see the last shred of sunset—a lingering coloured cloud which before had been hidden by the beech-topped hill.

"What is it?" said Julia breathlessly. Her breast was

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heaving and her hat awry. She was ugly with fright. "Look, Alec!"

"God!" exclaimed Alec in a voice unlike his own. "I've gone and done it!"

"You . . . What?"

"I thought what you said—what the preacher—the Bible—says,—and when we were—were—you know—sitting down—wished it . . . Oh God! I've done it now!"

"Done what? *What?*"

"Moved Ramshorn Hill. It's gone!"

They stared into one another's eyes. Julia recovered first.

"P'raps you haven't, really. Let's go and see."

They started walking over the Down, towards the great white patch.

It was almost dark. Both of them were shivering. They felt as if there were presences, invisible eyes, abroad on the Downs.

Where Ramshorn Hill had lain, there was a hollow like an immense quarry. They stood on the edge and looked down into it, into a whitish blackness.

"What's that?" screamed Julia.

A rabbit with a broken foreleg hopped up over the topmost edge and crouched on Julia's boot. Pieces of chalk were falling deeply into the hollow. They echoed from side to side.

Ramshorn Hill was gone.

Alec and Julia stayed a few minutes, looking down into the vague, terrible, mysterious hollow. Alec heard the wind rising. "Let's get down to nurse's," he said.

"Yes, yes! What *will* you do?"

"Promise you won't say anything to anybody at all, Julie."

"I won't."

"Sure certain?"

"Oh, chase me!" said Julia with an hysterical attempt at laughter. "What a do!"

"Be quiet!" said Alec. It was the first time he had ever spoken to her with command in his voice.

Silently and separately they had gone up; silently and a little apart, with careful peering footsteps, they returned down the track.

A light appeared in the back window of the cottage, as if to guide them.

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"Julie," said Alec, taking her arm, "I forgot when I moved the hill that you wouldn't be in Acton."

"You don't know the hill is.—I say, how they'll look!"

The Downs were gathered into darkness.

V.

Behold the wonder-workers then! slinking down from the hill as if some fellow townsman, some tell-tale-tit acquaintance of their fathers and masters had suddenly broken in upon their youthful endearments. Never before had they been in quite such an extraordinary state of mind. It was not that they had had time to become conceited; to feel themselves the distinguished practitioners of real miracles. It was not that they themselves were filled with wonder. On the contrary, they simply brimmed over with a boiling bubbling mash of half-cooked emotions. For it is too hastily assumed that the faculty of wonder is common to all men and needs no cultivation. Alec and Julia could have wondered generally at the usual objects of that attitude; at the common objects of the seashore, at the triumphs of engineering, at the marvels of a cheap press, and at their own insides. But Ramshorn Hill . . .

No. That at present was too great for their wonder. They knew, of course, that it was gone; they knew the circumstances under which it went; and that was all. But, on the other hand, they understood secrets quite nicely; they had often made and broken them; it was their pledge of secrecy that their intellects were most capable of fastening on; and that, indeed, was the topmost subject in their minds.

Mrs. Parfitt, the antique and hirsute little nurse, had been all ears for their footsteps. She ran out to the gate, lifting her feet straight up and down after the manner of old women in soft boots, and her side-curls waggled bravely as she called out: "La, Master Allie! I thought you was never coming, my dear; and I been so frightened I didn' know what to do. There! come in and bide a minute, and I'll tell 'ee all about it."

She hustled them into the cottage and turned up the lamp, at which they blinked stupidly like fowls at roost when a light is taken into the hen-house.

In an awe-stricken voice, Mrs. Parfitt began again: "There's been a . . . La, Master Allie! How pale you d' look, and I do declare if your nice young lady bean't paler 'n you be! You didn't ought to stay up on they cold Downs now the nights is drawin' in—sittin' on the grass, I'll be bound—ay, I knows!

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If you d' go sweetheartin' so fast, you won't have no sweetheart left come you be married. Now sit you down, do 'ee, and I be goin' to give 'ee a drop o' summut short ; and then I'll tell 'ee—No ! I be goin' to do it. You be 'bout shrammed and 'twill do 'ee a power o' good. Sit you down by the fire, my dears. I d'always have a little fire in the chill o' the evenin', or else off I goes to bed."

Though the lovers were already late enough, their contact with the miraculous had inclined them to stay by any homely human being. The cottage, after the dark wide Downs with their whistling wind and the great hollow, was like home after travel, shore after a stormy voyage. So they sat them down and looked sheepishly about the room ; gazed at each other in timid expectant fashion. Mrs. Parfitt busied herself with hot water, glasses, spoons and sugar—all the cheerful apparatus of hot grog. She set a glass-stoppered bottle—most like a vinegar bottle—upon the table. "There, Master Alec ! 'tis some o' your father's own, what he give me last Christmas, and I ain't hardly touched it yet, you see."

Alec recognised the label on the whiskey. He knew its retail price, two and elevenpence. He knew its wholesale price—very considerably less—for he had heard his father boast about it. He even thought he knew the profit on a hogshead. By mistake one day his mother had dosed him, for colic, with that famous whiskey, and the doctor had had to be called in either for the cholic or the whiskey. He thought, therefore, that they had better be going.

"No, no, my dear !" protested Mrs. Parfitt. "'Twill do 'ee a power o' good. And I want to tell 'ee—while you've a-been on the hill."

Glasses were filled, spoons clinked, and an odorous steam, not, be it said, wholly free from rankness, ascended like a sacrifice towards the ceiling. Cosiest of little parties it seemed—the young man taking his future wife to the nurse of his childhood. Alec sipped, keeping his glass in his hand, and sat back further in his chair. Julia took a gulp, wiped her mouth, shuddered, and set the glass down on the table very deliberately. Mrs. Parfitt poured herself out what she called a tiny teeny drop o' good stuff.

"As I was a-goin' to say," she began once more. Then changing her mind, she got up and reached down something from the mantleshef. "Look at my poor little china shepherd," she complained, "as I've had ever since I left your ma's."

The china shepherd was broken into several pieces. Alec was requested to take the bits into his hand ; likewise Miss Jepp.

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The old woman stood over them. She shook her head, uplifted a finger, and said solemnly : “ ’Tis my belief as ’twas an earthquake shook it down ! ”

Alexander Trotman looked, reddened, rose up, sat down again. Julia Jepp sat where she was and made warning faces at her excitable young man.

“ Didn’ ’ee feel the ground tremble ? ” continued Mrs. Parfitt in a ghost-story voice.

“ When ? ” inquired Alec faintly, glancing at Julia.

“ P’raps it was a cart going by,” hazarded Julia with a fierce stare at Alec.

“ Bless you ! I d’know the sound o’ that. ’Twas an earthquake, I tell ’ee ; and I thought of the Burnin’ o’ Rome picture in your pa’s sittin’-room and said *Our Father*.”

“ We don’t have earthquakes nowadays,” said Alec, in whose mind earthquakes and miracles had become somewhat mixed up.

“ No,” Julia added authoritatively. “ And we *must* be going now ; really ; mustn’t we Mr. Trotman ? ”

Mrs. Parfitt took not the least notice. She had been watching them keenly in order to feast on their surprise. Instead, she saw hesitation and significant glances.

“ Don’t ’ee tell I you don’t know nothin’ about it ! ” she burst out triumphantly. “ ’Tis that what’s made ’ee so pale. If I didn’t think ’twas when I see’d ’ee comin’ ! ”

Alec and Julia bobbed their heads violently at one another, got up, and began whispering : “ Nurse won’t tell.—’Tisn’t that.—She’s safe.—Nobody’s safe. Your fault if it does.—All right.—Remember. I told you so.”

A moment’s silence, and then :

“ It was me,” said Alec.

“ Alec’s moved a hill,” Julia explained.

“ Ramshorn Hill,” said Alec.

“ And we don’t know where it’s gone to.”

“ Acton, p’raps. . . . ”

“ La, my dear ! What do ’ee mean ? ”

The secret was beginning its travels. In the three-cornered conversation that followed, Julia told the tale, Alec supplied corroborative details, and Julia again tried to stifle her lover’s indiscretions—with no great success so far as the glorious fact of kissing was concerned. Mrs. Parfitt would not even appear to believe them until Julia repeated the preacher’s text. At that, the old woman credited the miracle in very orthodox fashion, as the Bible itself is credited ; sufficiently to talk about it, that is, and to indulge in supposition and partial belief ; no

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more. She was implored to keep their secret, and to humour them she gave her promise as if she really thought there was a great occurrence to be kept dark.

"Course I will," she said. "But just you go home, Allie dear, and get quick to bed like a good boy. I'll be bound 'tis the earthquake's upset 'ee a bit; and I 'spect as Mr. Merritt, Squire Burdrop's shepherd, 'll find your Ramshorn Hill safe enough when it be light. Now good night, my dears. Go straight home, and sleep tight."

It was past ten o'clock. The lovers were tremulously tired. They arranged to meet each other on the morrow at Clinch's side door, after the young ladies had finished their one helping of pudding, but before the Clinch family had got through its second.

"I don't know what we shall do—might be a devil of a row," said Alec with a whine shading into bravado.

"I can't hardly believe we've done anything," said Julia.

"*I* can't . . ."

They kissed again in parting—poor babes in the world!

Alec's mother let him in, asked him what was the matter, gave him bovril and threatened him with his father. Mr. Clinch, who let Julia into the Emporium, fined her there and then one shilling. Mrs. Parfitt locked up her cottage and hurried up the road to see if Mrs. Merritt—Squire Burdrop's shepherd's wife—was yet a-bed.

VI.

Children passing the porch of the Blue Boar Hotel, look down the hospitable passage, into the hall and at the pillars thereof, as reverently as a yokel takes his first peep into the Houses of Parliament. If they are sent there on an errand, to order the 'bus, to buy brandy or a bottle of wine, they creep along the passage with timid steps and wait on one foot just inside the swing-doors until that great lady the barmaid calls them up to the long bow-windowed bar. Then they advance shyly to the side, and deliver their messages in wee small voices, so that the great gentlemen who lounge at the front window shall not be able to hear. If they are kept waiting, which is more than probable, they steal glances at the white, red and green glasses, at the crystal spirit-kegs and decanters, at the hanging tankards and piled-up cigar boxes inside the windows; or else they open their eyes at the larder on the other side of the hall, with its old bulls-eye panes of glass, its Stilton cheeses and its mighty joints of

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beef. They wonder into what mysterious and sacred regions the wide staircase leads, and what is on the other side of the broader spring-doors which are covered with highly tinted paper transparencies of saints, and which, if they should open, reveal the spacious, cavernous, cook-smelly and fly-blown Blue Boar kitchen. They shift out of the way of waitresses, scurrying by with laden trays. They jump when an electric bell goes off above their heads. They look down at the ground respectfully if the awful dignity of the proprietor approacheth. When one of the great gentlemen saith a great big *damn* it hath an auguster sound than father's *damns* at home. It is something like church to them, the low-ceiled, vault-like, pillared hall, with its artificial light brow-beating the daylight, its brightnesses, and its dark and dingy shadows.

O children, revere the Blue Boar bar! Trowbury is a big little place, and the Blue Boar bar is the head and centre of it, struggle the teetotalers never so much. More business is done there than in the Borough Council Chamber, and as much fuss is made about it as in Parliament itself. Treasure your memory of it on a market day, when half a dozen servers are treading on one another's corns, and a seething pack of farmers, together with tradesmen who hope to make something out of them, is calling and hallooing for drink and is paying strong compliments to the barmaid; when the passage is almost impassable, and the pavement outside is crowded with men in all varieties of garment, who stand in talkative attitudes and pour samples of corn from one hand into the other.

But on ordinary days—when you usually see it, children—the place is given over to the peaceful occupation of your fellow townfolk. There they exchange their wit and wisdom. Marriages are predicted and made there, and characters undone. It is the noisiest place to hush a thing up in, and the quietest place to spread it abroad. There men discuss their enemies, friends, children and relations; their wives even. If your father is a Blue Bore, you may be certain that he has blabbed about you there, and has listened to those fat and elderly Paul Prys. There the Blue Bores obtain bibulous sympathy for their bilious ailments, or professional sympathy from a caged barmaid. They arrange the affairs of town and country, growing wise over glasses. Debts, scandals, health, visits to London, deeds good and bad; all is talked over and much of it known, Almighty and omniscient are the Blue Bores, some kindly and some not. 'Tis the head piece of Trowbury and of Trowbury's enlightenment. *In vino veritas*. So be it!

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VII.

In these days of a cheap press, not without a powerful trumpet of its own, nor lacking wind to blow it, people often forget that a piece of news is most interesting by far to those whom it concerns. But, after all, to onlookers, the reception of that piece of news is decidedly the most entertaining thing about it. So with the news of Alexander Trotman's miracle. For though Ramshorn Hill was not unimportant to London ; inasmuch as it altered the topography of a western suburb ; squashed, killed, and utterly hid three or four little families of Acton ; and caused for a time no small dislocation of metropolitan customs ; it made nevertheless a further-reaching and more permanent impression on the district whence it was removed, on the town and environs of Trowbury. Horrible catastrophes do not stir the heart of London ; unless that heart is really Fleet Street ; and it is notorious that the palpitations of Fleet Street are as transitory as they are profitable and alarming. Trowbury even did but devote a flabby "How terrible !" to the squashed families of Acton. The event worked itself out thus : at first London was excited while Trowbury was entertained ; then London found entertainment, as it always does, whilst excitement in Trowbury grew even more intense. London and Trowbury played see-saw ; a spectacle which was very wonderful ; Dignity and Impudence seated on either end of the swinging board making mouths at one another. But who can tell which was which ?

On the Monday morning, at the very hour when Alderman Trotman was talking to his wife, Miss Miles and Miss Cora Sankey, *soi-disant* manageress and barmaid respectively, and Robert, the billiard-marker of the Blue Boar Hotel, were all three putting the bar ready for its morning customers. Miss Miles, a fair, large and somewhat languishing beauty—beloved of customers who wanted quiet talks—was flicking the shelves with a duster. Rollicking Miss Cora Sankey was polishing the counters. Robert was alternately burnishing the taps of the beer-engine and pressing gently a boil on the back of his neck.

The hall was gloomy, for since the sun was said to be shining outside, the gases inside had been left turned down. Miss Sankey's terrible laugh—a prolonged *he-he* with a dying fall, which could not but have grated on the ear of a sensitive man in a perfectly sober state—and her equally terrible, distressingly cheerful chatter, were continually firing off like a magazine pop-gun. The Smile of the Blue Boar, Light in our Darkness, this noisy and popular little woman had been dubbed ; and as she was

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in no sense beautiful or charming, it has to be believed that her voice and laugh, and her dexterity with taps and glasses and men in their cups, formed her stock in trade as a barmaid.

She raised herself from her polishing ; stretched, and yawned. " Who d'you say 'll be first in this morning, Miss Miles ? Mr. Ganthorn or old Trotman ? "

" I'm sure I don't know. Neither perhaps."

" But who d'you think ? "

" Mr. Ganthorn probably."

" Well, I say Trotman. What'll you bet ? "

" Thank you. I've no wish to bet. Life isn't long enough to bet on bores."

Miss Sankey turned to the billiard-marker, asking loudly as if he had been in the boot-hole on the other side of the hall :

" What d'you say, Robert ? "

" I should say, Mr. Ganthorn, Miss."

" How much d'you bet ? Even threepences ? "

" Right y'are, Miss."

" Done ? "

" Yes."

" Put up your threepence then."

When they had put their coppers side by side on the shelf, near the cigar boxes, Miss Sankey burst into an echoing laugh.

" Got you now, Robert, me boy ! I counted yesterday how many drinks they had each. Mr. Ganthorn had twelve Scotches and Mr. Trotman had seventeen. Trotman's bound to be first. D'you see ? He'll wake up with a mouth and a liver, fat-headed, no end thirsty. Better give me your three-d. now at once. HE-He-he-he-he ! What'll you bet he'll have ? Scotch, and soda, or B. and S., or phizz ? "

" 'Spect you've asked him beforehand, Miss," replied Robert sulkily.

" No, I haven't, Robert. Come on ! Which is it ? "

" Robert," said Miss Miles. " You won't be finished if you don't get on."

" HE-He-he-he-he ! "

Outside the Blue Boar. . . . Who is this small, jaunty, clean-shaven little man with peculiar spectacles, that is coming down the Market Square ? He is exactly opposite the Blue Boar porch. Eyes left ! Left turn. Eyes front ! Quick march ! He is safely within the Blue Boar passage—screened from the eyes of the Market Square. He is in the hall ; at the bar.

Miss Sankey has lost her bet.

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"Good morning, Mr. Ganthorn. How's you? Didn't expect the pleasure so soon."

The manageress who disliked Mr. Ganthorn's airy-mindedness, retired in a dignified manner to the office behind the bar.

"H'm, h'm! Beastly liver on me. Don't know why. H'm! Brandy and a *little* so-dah, please Miss Cor-ah. How's that for a rhyme?"

"He-he! getting poetical in our old age."

"How's the boil, Robert?"

"Bad, sir, thank you."

"You ought to take a teaspoonful of brewer's barm three times a day, Robert. Fine old remedy for boils."

"What ye talking about?" exclaimed Light in our Darkness. "I'm going to do the trick when it's ready. A piece of lighted paper in a ginger-beer bottle, and clap it over. I'm a good nurse . . ."

"You are, Miss."

"Barm prevents 'em," said Mr. Ganthorn.

"But Robert's got his. It ain't prevented, you see. HE-He-he-he! We'll manage, better than lancing, when it's ripe. Nurse you too, Mr. Ganthorn, if you're ill."

"I know how to take care of *myself*."

Miss Miles had come to the office doorway. "Robert," she said, "go and tell Boots to put on a fresh cask of bitter."

Robert took his sixpence from the shelf, spat on it, and went.

"Not a bad lad," Mr. Ganthorn remarked.

"Wants teaching a bit," said Miss Sankey. "D'you know, he got the chuck from his last situation—gentleman's mansion—because he would smoke and would not wear a nightshirt. HE-He-he-he-he!—Morning, Mr. Trotman. How's you this fine day?"

Mr. Trotman was making his entrance by the back door with the important mien of a borough mace-bearer. He carried a copy of the *Halfpenny Press*, which he strove to unfold as he walked. Just as he reached the counter he succeeded. He spread the paper out.

"Look here!" he said.—"Damn!"

"Sh, sh, Mr. Trotman! HE-He-he-he-he! You know you mustn't say that here or you'll have to put a penny in the hospital box."

"Confound! Have you got the *Halfpenny Press*?"

"It's in use in the coffee room."

"What's up?" asked Mr. Ganthorn.

"Didn't you see?"

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"What? I haven't time for reading ha'penny rags."

Mr. Ganthorn turned ceremonially to his glass.

"Haven't you heard anything?"

"Heard? What?"

"One'd think Robert's boil was gone off bang," shrieked Miss Sankey. For once, however, the gentlemen took no notice of Light in their Darkness.

"Why they say that a vast mountain has suddenly appeared in London—volcanic upheaval—extinct volcano. . . . I read it in the paper."

"Street upheaval, I expect," said Mr. Ganthorn in the tone of one closing a subject. "Some of the heavy sky-scrappers they're putting up are quite enough to do it, to say nothing of laying electric cables among the gas and water mains."

"But it has absolutely blotted out a vast number of men women and children. . . ."

"*Halfpenny Press*. Take it *cum grano*—with salt, Trotman."

"A sauce is my condiment," said Miss Sankey. "I love it! Are you a condimentarian, Mr. Trotman?"

"All in moderation, Miss Sankey," replied Mr. Trotman. "I remember when I was a boy, my father always said . . ."

"Morning, Mr. Clinch! Enjoyed your visit to Town? Eh? I 'spect you have. There! you're blushing. HE-He-he-he-he!"

Perhaps Mr. Clinch of the Emporium did indeed blush. Who can tell? His short fat body was surmounted by a round red face which blushed at all times. So rubicund was he that, where other people's faces inclined to red, over the cheek-bones, his own indicated by a tint of blue where his cheek-bones were buried.

He regarded Miss Sankey for a moment, placed a fat white ringed hand on the edge of the counter, and said in a voice very like a mongrel dog's when it has a bone: "I'd pack *you* going. Gin with two drops of Angostura. At once. Biscuits. And the paper."

"All right. Paper's in use. You ain't in your own rag-shop, Mr. Clinch, and I ain't your wife or one of your young ladies. Pity you didn't get killed in Mr. Trotman's terrible catastrophe. Came down by the early morning train, didn't you? I know. I've got to know when I've got to serve people like you, and listen to your talk."

Miss Miles's re-appearance from the office strangely damped the fire of Councillor Clinch's temper. But just when Alderman Trotman was buttonholing him to tell him about the

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catastrophe, a tall bovine man with side-whiskers, his dress an old tail-coat, knee breeches and crumpled muddy gaiters, walked quickly and heavily into the hall.

"Early, Mr. Potterne?"

"Gie I two brandies an' one small soda, Miss—all in one, please. Never felt the need o' a drop so much in all my born days."

He turned to the Blue Bores: "Ramshorn Hill's gone, clean gone in a night," he said, looking into each face in turn. "An' they told I in the yard as half London's been buried. 'Tis a judgment!"

"Nonsense, all of it," remarked Mr. Ganthorn.

"I tell 'ee I saw the hill gone wi' me own eyes!"

"What is it, d'you think?" inquired Mr. Trotman in a voice full of an awe that was partly due to the subject and partly to Farmer Potterne's reputed wealth.

"That's what I dunno. Garge be comin' up the yard. He'll tell 'ee."

"Something very serious for the world is happening," Mr. Trotman said. "In this morning's *Halfpenny Press* . . ."

"I should say," Mr. Ganthorn interrupted, "that you'd better look after your own affairs instead of terrible catastrophes. We're going to bring up the question of your house in Low Street at this morning's council meeting."

"What for? It's not on the agenda."

"What for indeed? Drains! I told you when you bought the property that the drains would cost you more than the place itself."

"The drains are all right."

"The house is nothing more or less than a ventilator for the main sewer. There's not a proper trap on the place."

"Well, what the . . ."

"You'll find out at the meeting. How many people have had fever and sore throats in that house? Eh? Have they got 'em now, or not? One of your tenant's doctor's bills drove him bankrupt. The surveyor warned you a long time ago."

"I tell you what," said the Mayor. "I'll make you, and the surveyor too, understand that I am the civic head of this town."

"Till next November, old chap.—I say . . ."

Alderman Trotman walked out of earshot. George Potterne, a smarter and stupider edition of his father—a young man who seemed to be clothed in innumerable coloured ties, collars, waistcoats and gaiters—stumped in from the yard.

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"Yer, Garge; they won't believe I. Tell 'em . . ."

"Tell 'em to go and see," said Garge. He winked and wagged his head at Mr. Ganthorn. "Old man's got it on the nerves a bit."

"So has our Famous Grocer. It's all rot."

"The hill *is* gone."

"That 'tis!"

"Some slight seismic disturbance . . ."

"Don't know them half-crown words. Ramshorn Hill be gone, an' that's enough for me. Seeing's believing."

"And there's been a catastrophe in London," Mr. Councillor Clinch added.

"Nobody'll be a penny the worse for it all," said Mr. Ganthorn. "They make mountains out of molehills nowadays . . ."

"I tell 'ee, ye little whippersnapper, they be a good many pennies the worse. I be, damn it!"

The speaker was a stout florid man in old-fashioned sporting clothes; somewhat the figure of Mr. Clinch, but rounder and firmer, with a complexion that owed its colour rather to good living and the weather, than to over-eating and liquor. It was Squire Burdrop, a survivor of the old wheat-farming days, before those who tilled the earth called themselves agriculturists. "I be a lot the worse," he continued in an angry voice, "and my poor wife, she's done nothing but go off into faints since she felt the ground a-trembling. I rented Ramshorn Hill because I wanted more grazing, and I won't pay me rent for it—not I! I'll talk to the Crown Commissioners when I see 'em. I won't pay a penny. I'll claim damages. I'll bring an action.—Pint o' old and a fourpenny cigar, please, my dear.—When I took the grazing of Ramshorn Hill last year, how did I know 'twas going to go like a thief in the night? How did I know, I say? I *won't* pay rent for the darned thing—there! My shepherd's out now trying to find a couple o' my best lambs—gone too, I s'pose. Whosever's done it, I'll be level wi' 'em. Dan'l Burdrop's never been done down yet. . . . 'S anybody know anything about it?"

"We heard . . ."

"The milkcarts said . . ."

"In London, Squire, there's been a . . ."

"There, damn it! You don' know anything about it, I can see, none on 'ee. When you want a thing looked after, look after it yourself. That's true!—I'll come and see that hunter o' yours to-morrow, Potterne. D'you think she'll carry fourteen stun ten? Eh? Good morning."

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Squire Burdrop tossed up his tankard of old beer, put his hands deep in his front pockets, and stamped out. Silence fell on the company. The great events of the night were so uncertain and so unexpected that the Blue Bores could not yet realise what had happened. They could have made livelier conversation with smaller occurrences of a less conjectural nature and preferably of some years ago ; for slow wits talk best on the retrospect. They drifted one by one out of the Blue Boar bar to that place of gossiping only second to it, the Blue Boar porch. In the course of the morning, "pressure of business" relaxed sufficiently to permit Messrs. Ganthorn, Clinch and Trotman's attendance at a third place of gossip, namely the borough council chamber.

VIII.

Mr. Trotman was late for dinner. Mrs. Trotman would have liked Alec to begin without him, while there was still plenty of red gravy in the meat, but Alec protested more than filially, almost vehemently indeed, that he would much rather wait for his father. Then he went out of the house ; down to the Station Road. His pimply face was pale and worried, not to say scared. At five-and-twenty to two, by the new watch his mother had given him secretly, he whistled in a peculiar manner which, being interpreted, means, "Where the devil are you?"

He would have liked to give also the other whistle: "Come, my love, I'm waiting for you."

Before long, Miss Jepp appeared at the side-door. "Well? You must be quick, Mr. Trotman. They're earlier than most days. They've nearly finished, and the guvnor's as cross as two sticks."

Maybe her black dress of servitude, instead of the yellow costume of the day before, lowered Alec's spirits further than ever. "Have you seen the papers, Julie?" he asked in a pitiful voice.

"Haven't had a chance. What's the matter? They've been talking about an earthquake in London all the morning. Mrs. King was full of it when she came to try on her mantle."

"It's Ramshorn Hill. I've read it. It's killed a lot of people."

"Nonsense! There weren't any on the Downs."

"In London, I mean.—Julie, what shall we do? I don't know. They'll find us out and have us up for murder."

"*You* keep quiet . . ."

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There was a noise, inside the house, of chairs scraping along a floor. Julia stood a moment listening, looked at Alec with tender, almost humorous interest, touched his arm, and exclaimed: "You've done it now!"

"I can't . . ."

"I must go. They're on the move. Good-bye."

The door was shutting, Julia disappearing. Alec called her back despairingly: "Julie, Julie! D'you think it really was me?"

"You?"

His voice sank to the utterly confidential. "I've been trying to move a heap of bricks in the garden half the morning, and I can't; not an inch."

"My word! there's the guv'nor calling me. Quick. Good-bye."

The door shut finally. Julia was gone. Alec slouched home with his hands in his pockets, wearily. His native town seemed, as it were, strange to him.

The Mayor was home. Mrs. Trotman, on hearing the street-door open, came out into the passage and said very quietly: "Wait till your father's finished. There's been a bother at the council—drains!"

Alec therefore hung about the shop and the passage. The female clerks were due back from their dinner. Miss Starkey, as usual, was the first to return. The other female clerks, those at the counter, who were perhaps slightly jealous, used to say that she "bossed the place" and "had the old man in tow." Though her proper position was within the glass cash-box, or office, in the centre of the shop, she did not always stay there. A pale, anæmic, small woman, she knew how to wear her clothes better than the others, and Julia Jepp was accustomed to help her with the ideas of the before-mentioned leading London houses. Clever, impetuous, snappy, trustworthy; the customers often asked for her to serve them; just as they often passed the shop when His Worship was to be seen at the counter. Best of all, she could be left in charge of the Famous Grocery when its master left it for still more congenial surroundings, and its mistress disdained it. She knew the credit of most of the notabilities who lived in and around Trowbury. Mr. Trotman retained her services not because he wanted to; he did not; but because she knew and did her work. He spoke of her as "a capable young person," a credit to himself, and he hated her and all her abilities. A permanent quarrel smouldered between them.

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Alec, since his *début* as a lady-killer, had found a hundred and one ways of aiding young women when before he would merely have watched their struggles with curiosity. He now offered to help Miss Starkey off with her jacket. That done, she swung the garment to and fro, looked him up and down smiling to herself the while (the foremost cause of Mr. Trotman's dislike), and said airily: "You're looking very pale, Master Alec. Very!"

"Am I? D'you really think so?"

"Look at your hand. Hold out your hand. There; it's trembling like my stepfather's did before he saw his last batch of snakes, and died."

"Not really?"

"Yes 'tis. Is it because you are going to leave your mammie?"

Irresolutely Alec replied. "No."

Miss Starkey's voice was not unsympathetic. It was noticeable that most women, young or old, used a motherly tone in talking to Alexander Trotman.

"Is it going away from it's Julia then? Hasn't she weaned you properly? Is that it?"

Alec blushed. "No, it isn't that, Miss Starkey."

"I believe it is. I'll tell her so the next time I see her."

"It isn't. Julie, Miss Jepp, 'll tell you. Tell her I said she could."

"She'd tell me without your kind permission, Mr. Alec. We haven't been friends all the time she's been here for nothing. What is it? Where did you go last night? Tell me! If you've done any harm to my Ju. . . ."

Mr. Trotman's voice was heard approaching. "I must clear out," said Miss Starkey.

Alec hesitated; then, out came his news. "Miss Starkey, promise you won't tell? I've moved Ramshorn Hill. Moved it away. The catastrophe in London . . . Ask Julie."

A deep sepulchral voice of vast dignity broke in upon them. "Did I engage you, Miss Starkey, to talk to my son in the passage?—What are you doing here, Alec?"

"He only helped me off with my jacket."

"Don't answer *me* back."

"He's more of a gentleman than you are," said Miss Starkey under her breath, turning to go into the shop.

Mr. Trotman caught at her words:

"What's that? What did you say? I engaged you to do your work . . ."

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"And I've done it."

"I've heard quite enough of your goings-on after shop hours. You're a thoroughly fast young woman; that's what you are. You'll go from here; you're not fit to be in a respectable establishment. Mrs. Trotman . . ."

"That faded old cat!"

"Silence! Your father died of drink. *I* know."

"He didn't."

"He did."

"He didn't. 'Twas my stepfather. My father was a good man."

"I'm not so sure of that."

"You devil! I wish . . ."

Mr. Trotman drew himself up like an offended goose. "You'll take your money and go this instant.—Go and have your dinner Alec, immediately!"

Mrs. Trotman cut off for her son a couple of slices from the juiciest part of the joint. "What is it now?" she inquired. Mr. Trotman entered the room and poured out for himself a stiffish glass of whiskey.

"I've sent Miss Starkey going with her pay."

"A good job too," said Mrs. Trotman.

The Mayor took a deep draught of his whiskey. "I did all right," he said, "to engage her by the week instead of by the month. She might have claimed a month's pay. But she wouldn't have got it."

"She doesn't deserve it," said Mrs. Trotman.

He heard the unfortunate girl's footsteps in the passage. Putting his head round the door, he shouted, "Be off my premises at once!"

"She's no better than she ought to be," he remarked to his wife.

"Sh!" said his wife.

IX.

Looking backwards, it is at first sight astonishing how little commotion Monday morning's news made in the small and presumably dull town of Trowbury. Ramshorn Hill had totally disappeared—so it was said. And there had been a terrible catastrophe in London, which involved the sudden appearance of a high hill on the outskirts of the metropolis, and the sudden disappearance of a few families whose manner of death was their only claim to notice.

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But why should Trowbury have been greatly moved while events remained outside it? To a hungry man his dinner is of more importance than eternal life: to Trowbury, which had its bread and cheese to earn, its little kindnesses to do and its petty malice to expend, unimportant business was more important than something conjectural on the Downs and a hubbub in newspapers, whose every fact was conjectural. Besides, the *Halfpenny Press*, even in its more truthful days, had never greatly moved Trowbury; and there, O Trowbury, didst thou show thy superiority—thy true sleepy Moonraker immobility.

A few energetic and curious people decided to make up driving parties to the Downs. Several clerks and shop assistants, effectually tied till after hours, planned their next cycle ride. The actual life of Trowbury flowed on as usual; like a river of treacle with flies stuck in it, and little eddies of alcohol here and there.

Mr. Ganthorn was the only eminent local personage who deliberately altered his daily round, his common task of earning an income on the minimum of work. It might have been observed that he was on the *qui vive*; but then he always was on the *qui vive*, and to no end that any one ever saw. For all his loud scepticism, he constantly put himself in the way of hearing news, which, since it came from only one source, the farming people around Ramshorn Hill, presented itself to him as many different versions of the same tale.

He was, though few knew it, the unworthy local correspondent of the *Halfpenny Press*; unworthy, because he could never learn the second of the local correspondent's two commandments:

1. Thou shalt send no news to any paper but ours.
2. Thou shalt send the news at once and find out afterwards whether it is true or not.

He could never get into his head that time equals circulation and that the possibility is greater than the reality—things axiomatic to the born journalist. Therefore he wasted his time in seeking truth until the *Evening Press* arrived from London. Then was he put upon his mettle.

The *Evening Press* not only contained headlines to which the *Halfpenny Press's* headlines were as visiting cards; not only contained the versions of spectators and an interview with a member of one of the ill-fated families, who happened on the memorable night to be nowhere near the scene of the catastrophe; not only contained the non-committal opinions of several distinguished scientists and the irrelevant empiricisms of a Leading Physician of Harley Street;—it contained, most

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wonderful of all, a report that there had been a seismic disturbance in Wiltshire, communicated (said Ganthorn to himself) by that damn'd officious local correspondent at Marlborough.

The *Evening Press* queried, asserted and denied some connection between the two occurrences.

Ganthorn set to work. He started with a brandy and soda at the Blue Boar, wasted half an hour in trying to get through on the telephone, and finally rushed off to the telegraph office just before closing time. His urgent telegram did not reach the *Halfpenny Press* until after the last down train had left Paddington station.

Trowbury and its news was, for one more night, cut off from the world.

X.

On the Tuesday morning, the news began to make no little stir even in Trowbury. The *Halfpenny Press*, with its mighty headlines and heavily leaded columns, its many versions, all different, and its impressive theories and opinions, all contradictory, impressed upon the mind of Trowbury that it was really becoming more famous than it already thought itself. The *Penny Press* and the twopenny *Times* deepened the impression in their own platitudinous and stodgy ways respectively. Above all, the adventurous spirits who had cycled and driven to the Downs the previous evening, brought back fearful tales of a yawning gulf, an abysm, where Ramshorn Hill had formerly stood. What with the Downs and London, Trowbury became decidedly confused. Men said, "Queer!" and explained the thing away. Women said, "How dreadful!" and while assuming the news was true, hoped it wasn't so.

Alderman Trotman read his newspaper, gave forth his worshipful opinions over his bacon and eggs, repeated his inalterable determination that Alec should inevitably leave home on the Thursday, and directed him to begin packing forthwith. "And don't go bothering your mother," said the father. "She's got quite enough to do for me." Business called him, and he went off to the Blue Boar.

A stranger arrived at the Blue Boar by the first train from London, and inquired after Mr. Ganthorn and Mr. Ganthorn's house. Though he asked many questions, more especially about Ramshorn Hill, nobody was able to draw out of him any information about himself. Therefore the Blue Bores, according to their custom, said that he was a little bounder on no good business at all.

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At the side-window he ordered a soda and milk. Soon, Alderman Trotman who was arguing upon, or rather expressing his opinion of, the morning's news, took up his glass and strolled round to the side-window, ostensibly to look at the clock and at a railway time-table.

"Beautiful weather," said he to the stranger. "A fine outlook for the harvest."

"Yes, beautiful weather."

"Trade has looked up this season in London. The Court always makes trade more brisk."

"So I believe."

"Commercial gentlemen, I hear, have booked good orders in the provinces."

"Is that so?"

Mr. Trotman placed his glass on the counter beside the stranger's. "A temperance lecturer, sir? I can't say I'm exactly a teetotaler. Moderation in all things. . . . You intend to lecture here? It is unfortunate the Town Hall assembly room is under repair. . . ."

"No, sir," said the stranger, removing his silk hat and mopping his forehead with the fairest of white linen handkerchiefs. The like of his silky frock-coat might have been seen any Sunday in Trowbury, but the cut of it was obviously metropolitan. "No, sir; I'm neither a commercial traveller nor a temperance lecturer."

"No offence. . . ."

"Not in the least. I want to find a Mr. Ganthorn. They told me I should be sure to find him here."

"Ah! Unfortunately he is busy to-day with a very important audit, or he would have been here about this time. The Trowbury Sausage Company—one of our local industries. I am a considerable buyer from them, also a shareholder. Sound stuff."

"I want to see Mr. Ganthorn or, in fact, anybody who can tell me about the hill which is said to have disappeared, and the best way of getting there."

"I haven't been there myself yet," said Mr. Trotman, "but I can give you a good deal of information, or get it for you. You have seen the *Halfpenny Press*? You are. . . ."

"I am a special correspondent from the *Halfpenny Press*."

"Oh indeed, sir! No doubt we could arrange to let you have the surveyor's motor-car if it's not under repair. I'm afraid it is though. Will you come up to my house in Castle Street and have a snack? Pot luck, you know. I am James Trotman, at your service. Mayor, this year. . . . The proper person to come to."

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XI.

On that same Tuesday morning, the Blue Boar very nearly lost its position as the centre of events and Trowbury's fount of action. In a cottage under the Downs, a small old woman turned out of her bed, queerly half-dressed. She lighted a lamp, brewed herself a cup of tea, and set to work to shave her upper lip and chin. With a ragged blue shawl over her slip-bodice and a candle beside the looking-glass (the blind was carefully tucked against the window) she scraped away most patiently. She cut herself, mopped the place and put on a piece of spider's web to stop the bleeding. It was, indeed, precisely for that purpose that she allowed spiders to spin in one corner of her clean little bedroom.

At length, with crowing exclamations and a deep sigh, the shaving came to an end. Mrs. Parfitt poured herself out another cup of black tea and furtively, though she was all alone, she laced it with a few drops of the Famous Grocer's Fine Old Liqueur Whiskey. She sat down to three slices of bread and butter; thought better of it, and finished up the meat from a pork bone as well. Then she fetched a black skirt and a black bodice with jet on it from a lavender-scented chest of drawers that stood in a dry place near her kitchen fire. She went down on her knees and drew from under the bed a box containing a black bonnet with a pink rose in it. She adjusted all these things on herself with care and much shaking. She put on her boots, exclaiming at their discomfort, blew out the lamp, and was ready.

An important purpose shone through all the little old woman's trembling movements.

She was going to Trowbury.

But first of all, she climbed up to Squire Burdrop's head-shepherd's cottage. Mrs. Merritt was scolding and feeding her children.

"I jest thought as I'd go into Trowbury an' tell 'em about it," said Mrs. Parfitt. "After what your man told 'ee last night about they lambs gone, 't isn't right but they should know."

"No, that 't isn't, Mrs. Parfitt.—Merritt, he be gone out for to have a last look, and I be so caddled wi' these here little varmint I don' know which way to turn, or I'd take and go in 'long with 'ee."

"I see as you be busy, my dear.—Well, I'll come and tell 'ee all about it when I d'get back. You an't found no more lambs lost?"

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"Not as I knows of."

"Well, good marnin' to 'ee."

Mrs. Parfitt trudged into Trowbury as fast as her aged legs could carry her. She moralised to herself on the coming-in of motor-cars, standing stock still, even in the footpath, till each one had passed her. She could not help enjoying the delightful freshness of the July morning, but her old-fashioned greeting, "Beautiful marnin' that 'tis," was unheeded by many of the passers-by. The sun came out. The road dried up with cloudlets of vapour hovering over its surface. It was, after all, a hot dusty dishevelled old woman, holding her skirts high above her elastic-side boots, who tottered down Castle Street, turned as if frightened into the Famous Grocery Establishment, sat down on the nearest counter chair, and said to one of the female clerks: "Tell Mrs. Trotman, my dear, as I be come."

"Who shall I say, madam?"

"Why, bless me, my dear! Tell her 'tis me—Nurse—Mrs. Parfitt."

Before Nurse Parfitt had finished mopping, flicking and arranging herself, the female clerk returned. "Will you please step inside? This way."

"All right, my dear. Don't 'ee trouble. I know'd the way afore you was born."

The parlour was empty. As before mentioned, Mrs. Trotman's morning costume was apt to preserve only the shreds and jewellery of the previous night's elegance. And morning or afternoon, she could not get out of the habit, when a visitor was announced, of rushing upstairs to have a look at herself. Now, though it was only old Nurse Parfitt, Mrs. Trotman was obliged to run away and, as she would have said, to titivate a little.

When she did open the parlour door, with clean hands (but not wrists) and a coatee drawn on over her blouse, she exclaimed in tones of the gladdest and most hospitable surprise: "Why, Nurse!"

With a hearty, "Good marnin', my dear; how be 'ee?" Mrs. Parfitt rose up and kissed her. She commented on the weather, as if she had joy in it, but also a secret underlying grief; as if:

God's in His heaven,
All's right with the world

but the devil is main active all the same. Then she stopped to take breath.

"Have you heard anything about this Ramshorn Hill?" Mrs. Trotman took the opportunity of asking.

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"That's just what I come in for to tell 'ee," Mrs. Parfitt replied conspirator-wise, "only I'm blest if I knows where to begin."

"Will you take a little wine and biscuit, Nurse?"

"There! I don't mind if I do—just a teeny drop, if you please. You know, my dear, I d' always say as your husband's wine is the best as ever I've a-tasted—so nice and sweet—I can almost taste the grapes in it, I can."

Wine, biscuits, and cake, therefore, were set forth according to the good old Wiltshire custom which allows no visitor to depart unrefreshed. Mrs. Parfitt postponed the telling of her news until she had drunk a couple of glassfuls of wine and had eaten some shop cake. She was awaiting the dramatic moment, and meanwhile she beat about the bush garrulously. Finally, after some more remarks on the weather and the sadness of things in general, she laid a wrinkled discoloured hand on Mrs. Trotman's.

Though the Mayoress drew her hand away, the old woman was too full of her tale to notice it. "I shouldn't have come in all this way to tell 'ee, my dear," she said, "and I'm sure I didn't know what I was a-saying of when I promised him and Miss Jepp that I'd say nothing about it; but two o' Squire Burdrop's best lambs—his very best, so the shepherd's wife d' say—two o' they be clean gone, and 'twouldn't let me rest in my bed, and *that's* why I be come in to tell 'ee."

Mrs. Trotman was leaning forward and trying to get a word in edgeways. "Miss Jepp, Ramshorn Hill, Mr. Burdrop's lambs. . . . What *do* you mean, Nurse? Alec wasn't there?"

In the course of half an hour's fast talking Mrs. Parfitt succeeded in explaining, as far as she could, the events of the previous Sunday evening. She nodded her head so violently that her bonnet bobbed up and down. Besides laying particular stress on Squire Burdrop's lambs as her reason for breaking the secret, she was quite sure that the chill of the evening, or the shock of the hill's disappearance, had made Alec ill, so that, after all, he had not quite known what he was saying, and he had not really moved the hill. In thus trying to shield her Allie, she completely muddled his mother.

Mrs. Trotman rang the bell.

"Tell Master Alec to come here at once."

Alexander appeared. The strain of the last two days had told on him shockingly. He looked altogether crushed, flabby and frightened, as if a ghost had boxed his ears. Nurse Parfitt burst out: "La Master Allie! La! I know'd you was ill. Poor dear!" She even forgot to try and kiss him.

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"What is this about you and Miss Jepp and Ramshorn Hill?" his mother asked sternly in a tolerable imitation of her husband's sepulchral voice. "Were *you* on the Downs with *her* last Sunday night? Tell me."

Alec's eyes shifted about the room. He did not answer and his mother began again. She could be very severe with her beloved Alexander in a case of sweethearting.

"Nurse says you know something about the disappearance of Ramshorn Hill and Mr. Burdrop's two lambs. Were you up there? Tell me—at once! Who were you with?"

"I moved Ramshorn Hill," said Alec faintly. "It went." He was shifting his hands in and out of his pockets.

"What? I don't understand. I shall ask your father to look into this. Miss Jepp indeed!"

The strain and attempted secrecy were too much. Alec reddened. After a preliminary snuffle or two, he sat down, laid his head on his arms, and boo'd like a child. Nurse Parfitt toddled over to him. She put her arms around him; gathered him to her in the old nursery fashion. "There, there, Allie dearie! Never you mind.—I told you the poor child was ill, Mrs. Trotman. Your own son, it is!"

Mrs. Trotman was helpless. Though she could and did look after her son's stomach, she was at sea with his emotions. He did not seem to need feeding this time. What else could she do? On going out of the room to fetch salts and brandy, she met her husband and the Halfpenny Pressman.

"Sh! Alec is not very well. Don't go in there."

"Well, but Mister . . . I didn't quite catch your name, sir, Mister . . ."

"Fulton—John Fulton."

"Mr. Fulton, my better half.—Mr. Fulton has come up for a little lunch. What have you got?"

"You know what we've got."

"Do I, indeed! Ah, well, we have two larders here, my wife's for me and my own on sale. Pot luck, you know. We can camp out. Pot luck in your trade, no doubt. . . ."

Mr. Trotman always received a guest with jollity.

XII.

Mrs. Trotman showed her husband and his guest upstairs, whisked some clothing away from the sofa, and left them to admire that masterpiece of her elegant predilections, her own drawing-room.

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It was marvellously furnished. An exceptionally heavy round couch, upholstered in yellow, green and red flowered chintz, occupied the centre of the room. The wall was covered with small mirrors which had flowers and butterflies painted on them, and with pictures of wild scenery, painted as much like oleographs as possible to suit the English taste. Deep arm-chairs and silken seats on enamelled sticks; a solid mahogany sideboard with art muslin wings; a carpet of tropical luxuriance and an airily painted ceiling; a large black marble clock with bronze horsemen flanked by bits of Worcester china; formed a series of contrasts which symbolised—though she didn't realise it—her own life and that of her celebrated son. The two windows looked out on the busy traffic of Castle Street. Taste and commerce were cheek by jowl.

The Mayor and the Halfpenny Pressman were left together. How the one chafed at the polite informative discourse of the other, yet stayed because it was his business to watch and write, ought to be written in a National Dictionary of Journalistic Biography, advertised by Americans, and distributed over the entire world on the instalment system.

Presently, however, Mrs. Trotman put her head round the door and with grimaces full of meaning called her husband from the room. She whispered that into his ear which caused him to snort as loudly as politeness permitted and then to send imperiously for his son and Mrs. Parfitt.

After Alec had been up to his bedroom and had washed his eyes there began in the drawing room that revelation which convulsed the press, shook the sects, and quite definitely disturbed the saner portions of the nation. Chiefly owing to Mrs. Parfitt, it took as near as possible two hours and ten minutes. Miss Jepp was sent for—and was unable to come. Mr. Clinch was requested, with the Mayor's compliments, to send the said Miss Jepp to the Famous Grocery—and sent her. Miss Starkey absolutely refused to appear, even on being promised that her outrageous conduct should be overlooked; which was exceedingly ungrateful in the Trotmans' opinion. She sent such a rude message, in fact, that the Mayor felt certain her evidence would be absolutely worthless. The Halfpenny Pressman talked himself into a sweat, and his shorthand notes that he jotted down as soon as possible afterwards, read somewhat thus:

“Mayor (bumptious old fool) has son about twenty (poor looking specimen: bit off). Last Sunday, son and his girl (handsome girl: local draper's assistant) went to church and then

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cycled and walked to Ramshorn Hill. They assert (seem to be speaking the truth) that son wished Ramshorn Hill in London, for reasons of his own (query : what reasons precisely ? Can't get it out of the idiot). Hill did disappear about the same time as catastrophe in Acton. Queer. Son and girl very frightened. Should think so. Swear secrecy. Go straight and tell old nurse (terrible ancient with a tongue).

"Monday, son tells a Miss Starkey, lately in his father's shop (bit of a tartar by her message and the Trotmans' opinion). Ramshorn Hill found gone. News of Acton affair reaches Trowbury by *Halfpenny Press*. Nobody seems to have connected the two. Dull people round here.

"Tuesday, old nurse comes to Trowbury and breaks secrecy because local squire lost a couple of lambs when hill disappeared. Couple of dead sheep *were* found on the Acton hill. Queer again.

"Tale fits like a Chinese puzzle (mem.—*the* phrase, that). Must be something in it. Nurse's evidence of Sunday evening, and entire ignorance of Acton catastrophe, conclusive. Perfect corroboration and no possibility of collusion.

"Q.E.D. Son must have moved the hill. Girl certain he did, though she denied it till he said he did. Is he mediumistic ?

"Good haul, this."

At a quarter to three the Halfpenny Pressman sent a very long telegram to his headquarters. "You know the penalty, I suppose, for divulging telegraphic messages," he said to the "young lady" in the Post Office. "*Not exceeding one year's imprisonment.*"

Just after three o'clock the Mayor, the Mayoress, Alec, Miss Jepp, Nurse Parfitt and the Halfpenny Pressman sat down to a lunch of burnt beefsteak and onion and tinned eatables, followed by stuff from the pastry-cook's and some of the Famous Grocer's best Anglo-American cheese.

"I always knew," said Alderman James Trotman, first magistrate of Trowbury, "that my son had it in him to do something, though whether it would come out or not I could not tell, of course. What's bred in the bone, you know. . . . Take some wine, Alec, won't you ? and pass it on."

XIII.

Later in the afternoon the Halfpenny Pressman found waiting for him at the Post Office a telegram which caused him to say with a saddened savageness : "The idiots never can leave a

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poor devil to do anything on his own ! ” He bought a cap and a one-inch ordnance map of the district. He took a hasty uncomfortable tea at the pastrycook’s. He hired a bicycle. Then, with his coat-tails carefully arranged on either side of the back wheel, he cycled out of the town, towards the Downs. The road was so bad, owing to the driving of sheep over it, that, in trying to ride without the handle-bars while he compared the map with the surrounding country, he very nearly fell, silky coat and all, into the dust. So he rode on, putting his trust in fortune rather than maps. When he came to the open road—and a very inharmonious object he looked upon it—he gazed around him once more, and once more unfolded the map. He stopped a labourer going home from work.

“ Where is it that—that the hill was ? ” he asked.

“ Ay ? ”

“ Where is it that the hill went away from ? ”

“ Oh, ay ! You d’ mean the hill as went—got losted like. Ramshorn Hill they calls it, wi’ a dew-pond on the top. Won’erful thing, that ! Wer’ is ’er ? Now look you here. If you d’ go along the road till you d’ come to the third milestone, from Trowbury that is, you can see the top o’ the hill vrom just there. Leastways, you could zee ’em, vor I’ve a-zeen Squire Burdrop’s shepherd a-eatin’ his dinner on it when I been crackin’ stones hereabout.”

Of all this, the Halfpenny Pressman caught practically nothing except the words “ third milestone.” He remounted his bicycle and with something very like despair in his soul he made towards the place where the hill should have been. Then he dismounted, examined the map again, and decided from the contour-lines that the hill ought to be visible from where he was. If not . . . But it was not. The telegram, however, and the rough road had for the moment clouded his interest in the whole matter. He threw his cap on the bank, sat down, gathered his coat-tails into his lap, and lighted a cheroot.

Very curious—as curious as a mummy in a modern glass case—did he look, squatting in his silky black clothes among dusty grass tufts, and cornflowers whose blueness nothing seems able to sully. The light evening winds, sometimes smelling of the crops, sometimes of the dusty road, just chilled his half-bald pate. The magic of the Downs gripped him. Where he was, there he seemed to have been always. He forgot how the people at headquarters were about to snatch a good haul out of his hands. He reverted to his youthful days when such a thing as the *Halfpenny Press* had neither sullied, nor become the instrument

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of his dreams of success. He thought of his two children growing up pale-faced in the inner ring of London's suburbs; he swore a little more, then felt inclined to pray, and then meditated on his health. He even called to mind his dead relations; conjured up the face of his deceased mother. His eyes moistened. The Downs stripped his soul and left it naked; left it shivering indeed. A spot in the midst of their long heaving lines, their far-off noises and their beautiful clear dry lights, their immemorial spaciousness, he was so small as to be almost great.

Twilight came on slowly. Tobacco took precedence over deceased kinsfolk. The Halfpenny Pressman peered up the road till his eyes ached. Nothing moved on it except a bird or two and a hare. Then suddenly, as if by an optical illusion, the road became transformed into the likeness of a monstrous snake, with two bright eyes, winding down the hills. The resemblance was uncanny. But the professional side of the Halfpenny Pressman was now uppermost. He stepped into the centre of the road. He waved his handkerchief. A six-cylinder motor-car—the head of the snake—slowed down.

“Fulton?”

“Yes.”

“Anything fresh?”

“No . . . Yes. The evidence . . .”

“Where is the hill?”

“That’s where it was, there.”

“Nothing to see?”

“Only a big hollow, they say.”

“Haven’t you been there then?”

“No time.”

“H’m! See you again. Got your bicycle, haven’t you? Where does that Mayor live?”

“The grocery shop in the middle of Castle Street. Impossible to miss it.”

With a sustained hum, the motor car sped on to the Famous Grocery Establishment.

Fulton hastened after them denouncing to the hills the abrupt ways of the Director of the *Halfpenny Press*, who rode—so he put it—over the mangled bodies of starved and disappointed journalists.

At all events, the phrase had a fine journalistic ring. The Halfpenny Pressman felt the happier for it.

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XIV.

The Mayor of Trowbury received the Director of the *Half-penny Press*—a baronet (of recent creation), famous, wealthy, powerful and notorious, *and* a baronet—whose motor car could not have cost a penny less than a thousand pounds. A point, that, for the Blue Bores!

Sir Pushcott Bingley was humbly and proudly pressed to take a little supper at the Famous Grocery—"Pot-luck, plain food but the best"—and Mrs. Trotman was set cooking her utmost, the Famous Grocer fetching himself from the shop several delicacies which she knew not in the least how to use. In support of his invitation, Mr. Trotman mentioned jovially that the cook "at our antient hostelry" had just been discharged for drunkenness, that the kitchenmaid was far from fit to take her place in cooking for gentlemen, and that the whiskey there was not so mature as formerly. He promised all the aid that the Mayor of Trowbury could give towards elucidating the mystery of Ramshorn Hill. He had, indeed, some very important, some most important, information. They would discuss the matter . . .

The Director prepared to make the best of a bad job, to remain at the Famous Grocery for supper; but he decided that nothing should induce him to sleep the night in a house which, to tell the truth, smelt more than the least bit cheesy and fusty.

Meanwhile, high-falutin tragedy was working itself up in another part of the town—in a small back room of a small house in Augustine Terrace.

When Miss Starkey had been dismissed from her situation at the Famous Grocery, she walked aimlessly to the bottom of Castle Street, full of indignation against "old Trotman and all his beastly place." Then with a sudden revulsion from rage to self-pity, she found herself weeping and went quickly home. She sat down on her bed and looked out of the window, at a red-brick wall with tufts of grass growing in its unpointed crevices. She got up and walked about the room, touching things. It was a neat clean little place, its prevailing colour drab—a tint beloved of landladies because, even when it cries for washing, it doesn't show it. An oil-stove in the fender and a spirit lamp on the washstand denoted at once the bachelor's or spinster's apartment. But the most noticeable, the only really striking thing about the room was the pictures. Besides a faded photograph of a consumptive-looking man with fluffy side-whiskers (Miss Starkey's father), and a text or two about God's love, supplied by the landlady, the walls were decorated entirely by pictures of

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classical statuary and paintings. "A nasty naked lot!" the landlady called them.

After gazing for some time at nothing in particular, Miss Starkey dried her eyes, took a dose of *sal volatile*, arrayed herself before the glass, and walked out to Clinch's Emporium. Making straight for Miss Jepp's counter, she bought twopennyworth of black hat elastic, and whispered: "I want you after shop. Come round. Old Trotman's sent me going. I'll tell you this evening."

Miss Jepp looked startled.

"All right . . ."

"You come round," Miss Starkey repeated with a grim catch in her voice not unmingled with a certain note of triumph, "and I'll tell you *everything*!"

An eavesdropping male assistant was edging near. Miss Starkey tossed her head and went out.

XV.

Women like Julia Jepp run in where angels keep aloof. Yet even she might not have gone to her friend's lodging had she known what was in store for her. Miss Starkey was waiting, leaning over the banister, on the dingy little landing. "Oh, Julie! It's a quarter to nine. I thought you weren't coming." A squeak in the voice at *nine*, and a little snuffle at the end, warned Julia that tears were not far off. She opened her arms, so motherly for her age and occupation, and led Miss Starkey into the little room. It was in darkness, except for the sickly reflection of the moonlight. Lighting the smoky lamp did but increase the atmosphere of something impending. Long afterwards Julia shivered slightly at the smell of an ill-cleaned lamp.

Edith Starkey began her tale of woe:

"He turned me out at dinner-time with a week's wages. He was in an *awful* temper."

"What for? With you, dear?"

"Yes, I think . . . I don't know. Not at first. Anyhow, he sent me going, and he stayed hanging about to see that I went. He said dreadful things. Just like he does when he's . . ."

"But what for, Edie?"

"Yes," said Edith Starkey, continuing her own tale. "And Julie . . . I don't know what to do! I don't a bit. There's Mother . . . That old beast, Trotman, said my father was I don't know what, and I called him a devil. I did! I could

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have *hit* him. But he wasn't so far wrong. My step-father is, anyhow. That's it. He's a bigger beast than old Trotman. I haven't told you ever . . . Listen! He's nearly always in liquor. And he doesn't allow Mother any money, except to buy food for him to eat, and she has to have his leavings—sometimes he won't let her sit down to table with him,—and if I hadn't sent her money—I used to post it to a shop near our house,—she wouldn't have had anything at all for herself. And now I shan't be able to any more. She won't have anything—not a penny—not enough to eat. Oh, Julie, I don't know what to do!”

Edith Starkey was more than snuffling now; she had her handkerchief out and was blowing her nose vigorously.

“You must try and get Mr. Trotman to take you back,” Julia suggested.

“He won't. I called him too much when he told his lies about my father.”

“Perhaps he will. What was it all about?”

“He found me in the passage talking to Alec.”

“Oh . . .”

“Alec was only helping me off with my jacket. He's such a polite boy. We hadn't been talking a minute.”

“Really!” Julia's characteristic *really*.

“Oh, Julie, don't you believe me?”

Julia became aware that she had been hardening her heart. She softened.

“Yes, my dear, of course I believe you. But if that's all, Mr. Trotman 'll be sure to have you back—when he's in a better temper. Just you try, dear.”

“It's no good if I did,” Miss Starkey wailed. “I should have to go soon.”

“Perhaps some one else will give you a berth.”

“That wouldn't be any good either. I should have to go from them as well. Mother won't get any more clean money from me. *Julie!*”

Miss Starkey sprang up from the bed with a queer gesture of pride and abasement. She put her arms round Julia's neck and whispered . . .

Did she indeed whisper? Julia found herself aware of something, yet with no recollection, no echo, of speech in her ears. “Oh, Edie!” she exclaimed. There was an indefinite, undirected note of anger in her voice.

Miss Starkey drew away and stood in the middle of the room like a weeping child waiting to have some clothes tried on.

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"Yes, that's it!" she said.

"You haven't been and got married secretly?"

"No—I—haven't! Can't you understand. I ought to."

"Edie! How *could* you? And not tell me?"

"Tell *you*!"

Miss Starkey laughed through her sobs.

Julia was very white in the face. With effort she controlled herself lest she should lose her head and weep too. Though she seemed to be thinking deeply, she was in reality much more like a piece of blotting paper into which ink has soaked; which is not yet dry, but still wet, soft, and easily to be broken. She would have liked a good cry there and then.

But Miss Starkey had to be considered. She sat down on the bed once more. For a time everything was quiet, except for her sobbing and the meg-meg of voices downstairs and the wailing of cats in the back-yard. Then she began to talk in a machine-like wail that mingled with the voices of the cats, like a sad and thoughtful echo of their savage feline love-making.

"Don't look at me like that, Julie. I was so lonely. I'd have given anything—anything, for just a kiss like most girls. I couldn't help it. I used to look in the glass and think how old I was looking. He talked nice to me. You don't know how lonely I was. And I hadn't any money to go anywhere because I'd sent it all to Mother. I only had you for a friend, and since you've taken up with Alec Trotman. . . . I used to come home after shop and make some tea and sit down and look at my pictures—and then I couldn't sleep for thinking. And I'm anæmic, you know. I dreaded looking at myself, I was so peeky and old. I thought I should go off my head. Mad! So I went out, like the rest of them, instead of keeping myself to myself.—Julie! What are you looking at me like that for? *Julie!*"

"Who was it got you into trouble? Who was it betrayed you?"

The language of these young ladies is none the less sincere because, on high occasions, it resembles that of the novelettes they are accustomed to read.

"Who was it, dear?" Julia asked again.

"'Twas . . . No, I shan't tell *you*.—Julie, don't look like that."

Miss Starkey roared with laughter:

"I shall bear a son and he shall be called Unwanted! No—we'll call him James Alexander Trotman Starkey, Son of Loneliness and Bad Luck. It wasn't my fault, Julie." (Here she cried.)

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"'Twas the Trotmans' fault; the horrid old father and the pimply-faced fool of a son! Julie, don't look!" (And here she laughed again.) "I'll take my baby down the town, dressed in white, in a green mailcart with a leather hood. And people will say, 'There she goes!' and perhaps they'll pity me then. I shan't be lonely any more. A baby's better than an old maid's cat."

Miss Starkey was flinging herself round the room. She cried and laughed together. She knocked over the lamp, which went out. Julia, gathering up the pieces of glass, saw her white face by the moonlight, and her mouth opening and shutting, like a shadow-show on the wall, as she gabbled and laughed. It seemed as if the mouth had no connection with the voice that filled the room.

"Mother, Mother!" she called out, twitching and twisting like some one poisoned with strychnine or dying of lockjaw. "Julie . . . I've heard a clergyman say that our friends in heaven can see us, what we do. Do you think my father saw me—then? Julie, speak! Did he? I wonder what he thought . . ."

She burst into laughter.

"Sh, sh!" went Julia. "The landlady will hear."

"I don't care. Mother! Father! Mother! God, God! Everybody!"

A scream.

Julia forced her to lie down and undid her collar; slapped her, scolded her, and poured cold water on her, after the manner, approved in drapery establishments, of treating hysterical young women. "Who was it, Edie?" she asked, being full of suspicion.

Miss Starkey was not so far gone but she could catch at her friend's meaning. It needs knowledge of the depths of the hysterical mind to explain why she raved on: "'Tis the Trotmans who've ruined me—Trotman father and Trotman son! Cursèd be the house of Trotman! I hate the old man, and I hate his son, and I hate—oh, I hate—that old cat, Mrs. Trotman. If I kill myself, say it was the Trotmans made me.—Julie!"

But she was beginning to calm down. Physical exhaustion was gaining the upper hand. The muscular contortions subsided to a tremor, the strident voice and wild laughter to a dull muttering. Julia would have gone, had not pity, and an aching curiosity, kept her. Julia was a good woman. She suffered, perhaps, greater pain than her friend. But she wanted to know, to know . . . If she could only know.

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"Was it Alec Trotman?" she asked; and a sly cruel smile was the only reply.

Restraining an impulse to bully a plain acknowledgment of the truth out of Miss Starkey, she calmed her until sleep came, and then only did she leave the lodging-house—to face the infliction of a sixpenny fine for being late in at the Emporium.

"Is Miss Starkey ill, Miss?" asked the landlady as Julia went downstairs.

"Yes. But she's asleep now. Don't disturb her, please."

"Nothing very serious, Miss?"

Julia pretended not to hear. Nevertheless, the landlady had overheard enough to go upstairs, awaken Miss Starkey, and give her a week's notice to quit a respectable house.

This proceeding had the most beneficent effect possible in bringing that young lady to her senses.

XVI.

The supper at Alderman Trotman's was a great and memorable success. A real Sir—The Director of the *Halfpenny Press*—Sir Pushcott Bingley, Bart.—was their guest. It made them feel as if they were, and always had been, in the centre of the world's affairs. Certainly he was rather short with Mrs. Trotman's string of ladylike social sayings and with the Mayor's disquisition on how the Council ought to act, and ought not to have acted, for a progressive Trowbury. But what could the Trotmans do, other than follow the conversational lead of so honourable a guest, who made himself so thoroughly at ease in their happy humble home, who was, as for months afterwards Mrs. Trotman said, *such* a gentleman.

He began by interrogating them like a smiling Old Bailey barrister. He sauced his meat with questions and washed it down with replies. He even prevented the Mayor from answering questions addressed to Alec. That is one of the most convincing testimonies offered to his genius, for no one else had ever succeeded in making Alderman Trotman hold his tongue.

When the Halfpenny Pressman entered, just as they were nibbling cheese, Sir Pushcott turned to him and remarked pleasantly: "There's something in it, Fulton."

"I was sure of it from the first," said the Halfpenny Pressman.

"You had better go and get a little rest. I shall want you at the hotel at ten o'clock and you will go up to town in my motor."

Fulton retired. The conversation went on.

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The Trotman family had never seen its head in so genial a mood. His waistcoat bulged; his eyes twinkled; his bilious complexion flushed with colour. One end of his moustache looked heavenward, and the other end looked the other way. It was *My son this, My son that, I this, I that, I something else, I, I, I*. And Mrs. Trotman succeeded in telling Sir Pushcott what trouble she had had with Alexander's stomach.

The table was cleared, the whiskey decanter being left upon it. "Fine old liqueur, guaranteed twelve years old," Sir Pushcott," said the Famous Grocer. "You will do me the honour of taking a glass?"

Then an unprecedented thing happened. Sir Pushcott Bingley was seldom in his life tricked into showing his cards; he played them instead; but on this occasion . . . The Mayor's decanter held one of those clever blended whiskeys which are soft and clear to the palate, but treacherous in the drinking; whiskeys which get into a man's head unawares and cause him to surprise himself. *In vino veritas* is especially true of such liquor. No more than one glassful will sometimes render a man visibly true to himself. So, perhaps, it was with Sir Pushcott Bingley after supper. Whether his journalistic haul, or his exhilarating ride across the Downs, or Trowbury air, or his tiredness, aided the whiskey cannot be determined. At all events, he lay back in Mr. Trotman's own armchair and stretched his long legs across the rug. He ruffled his hair, his eyes brightened, and his dark thin face lighted up. As he talked he became, so to speak, an ordinary man astonished at the great exploits of one Sir Pushcott Bingley. Therefore to the Mayor's respectful questions, he gave replies both gracious and cynical. He spoke like a man so assuredly successful that he can afford to pick holes in the means of his own success.

"I can remember," said the Mayor, rolling a banded cigar between his lips, "when the press was very different to what it is now. In my young days we had newspapers for every shade of opinion, but nowadays they all seem to be on one side. At least, all the go-ahead papers do."

"Yes," replied Sir Pushcott. "All on the side of the angels. Eh? As a matter of fact there are no real parties. Liberalism and Conservatism are obsolete. There is the party in, and the party out; and not a pin's difference between them, except in their names and election cries. Of course, there is the Labour Party, but in trying to manage Labour they have succeeded in representing anything except labourers; nothing except themselves; they are negligible. The Press is party. First the

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Press puts one side in and then the other side. Parties have become simply the machinery—and, a deuced clumsy one at that—by which the Press rules the country. The electorate, it is true, decides on some quibble or other which party shall go in next; but it is the Press that invents the quibble. In point of fact, I, as Director of the *Halfpenny Press*, I am the true, free, independent and democratic voter. I am the real ruler. I am like the trusty butler of an old and fussy dowager. She does the fussing and I rule.”

“I see perfectly, quite see,” remarked Mr. Trotman. “I always suspected as much.” (He did nothing of the sort.) “But this amalgamation of newspapers in the last ten years or so . . . Is that also due to the parties becoming obsolete, as you say? I never used to understand how one man could own a Conservative newspaper in one place and a Liberal paper in another. It doesn’t seem right, if I may say so. Convictions are convictions . . .”

“If one man does serve two parties,” said the Director with a smile of doubtful meaning, “I admit there may be an element of dishonesty. But suppose two parties serve one man . . . that alters the case. There is no dishonesty in being served by two parties, or forty parties. It is the parties themselves that are dishonest with their absurd humanitarian pretensions and their electioneering claptrap. And as for the amalgamation of the Press, the so-called intellectual trust—as if newspapers were intended to be intellectual . . . Unity is strength: it’s money.”

“Yes, it is,” observed the Famous Grocer. “I have found it so myself. When I started business, I . . .”

“And now we may practically say that there are only three newspapers in the kingdom: the *Times*—Old Tuppenny, as they call it since I bought the controlling interest in it and reduced its price to twopence,—the *Penny Press*, and the *Halfpenny Press*. Other newspapers do survive, but they have only a technical or faddistic circulation, like *Science*, *The Motor*, *Excelsior*, vegetarian pamphlets, religious journals and sweetness-and-light magazines. There’s the Labour Press, of course, but that cannot afford an efficient news service and it expends its wits in making ignorant men guffaw.

“The *Times* is unchanged, except that it gives the minimum of news and all the advertisements it can get at prices it is afraid to reduce. For, as it told the world in 1912, it feels that its old-established energies are best directed towards the dissemination of really useful literature—cookery books, illustrated bibles, and publishers’ remainders furbished up, encyclopædias,

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dictionaries, home-dressmakers, and so forth. It is the organ of the deferred payment system, unrivalled even by the *Halfpenny Press*, at selling unnecessary commodities to people who can't afford them. It still remains the national journal—and rightly so—but you will notice that the foreign journals now quote the *Halfpenny Press*. Poor old *Times*! We've run it very hard."

"I have the *Encyclopædia Anglicana*," said Mr. Trotman proudly.

"Have you! It's nice to know what our grandfathers thought. The *Penny Press*, as I was saying, has a circulation, and a large one, among maiden ladies, clergymen, small shareholders and people who think they think. They revel in its platitudes and timorous respectability. One page of tall talk to two pages of advertisements is its recipe for amusing the British public, and to do it justice the public does turn to the advertisement pages first. It is the organ of the small investor, but it has now too little influence even to make a successful scare. I shall kill it altogether soon with my projected *Imperial Advertiser*—advertisements, and births, deaths and marriages, every single one of them in the kingdom; several correspondence pages and two serials with a strong love interest and no naked sexuality to offend the middle-class. That is the sort of newspaper for fighting the *Penny Press* on its own ground. That's the paper the man in the street will take home to the woman in the suburbs. The freely-opened correspondence pages will draw to it ninety per cent. of those who think they think."

"A great many people," said Mr. Trotman with resentment at Sir Pushcott's cocksureness, "run down the *Halfpenny Press* too."

"Of course they do. It is successful. It knows what it wants and gets there. It has more energy put into it than all the other newspapers taken together, and energy still counts in large affairs if prudence has taken its place in small. They talk about education, everlastingly, as if it were a cure-all instead of a process for making unfit nations unfitter: the *Halfpenny Press* has done more to educate the masses than all the education bills that were ever elaborated to death. It has given them innumerable items of knowledge as useless as the contents of school books and profitable to nobody except the shareholders of the *Halfpenny Press*. But, mind you, it *has* made the masses conscious of the world at large as well as of their own parish, of other nations as well as their own families. Granted that the world revealed to them by the *Halfpenny Press*, is part imaginary: what world, what revelation, is not? I don't say it has been done

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the best way possible. It could only be done on a satisfactory financial basis ; and the *Halfpenny Press* has done it efficiently and quickly, largely no doubt because it is a halfpenny ; for ha'pence can often do what pounds cannot. And perhaps in becoming world-conscious, the masses have lost consciousness of the universe and of their own souls, if they've got any . . . Who can tell ? That is not my business."

The magnitude of the baronet's arguments was putting Mrs. Trotman into a respectful confusion of mind. "Then," she asked, "is your *Halfpenny Press*, Sir Pushcott, going to be the only paper ?"

"I trust so, madam, eventually. One imperial nation, one God, one Church, one King, one newspaper, and one Director of the lot ! That is the watchword for our great and glorious race. It was I who prevented a disastrous war with Germany, though I should have been three-quarters of a million in pocket had we won, and perhaps if we had lost. But the issue of the war was too uncertain. It was I who brought about the triumphant war with the East African negroes. It was I who suppressed, till after peace, the disasters of the war against Turkey. It was I who created, who consecrated I might almost say, the Archbishop of All the Empire. It was I . . ."

Sir Pushcott Bingley dropped gently off to sleep. And the Trotmans sat obsequiously around him.

The Managing Director of the Empire was asleep !

"Poor man," said Mrs. Trotman, "he's so tired that he's fallen asleep." She spoke in such a way that it would be all the better if he were not too far gone to hear her. "He's a very nice gentleman, isn't he, James ?"

"Yes," replied her worshipful husband. "Not a bit proud."

"Don't you think we'd better wake him. He told that man he wanted him at the Blue Boar at ten o'clock, and its ten-to now."

"Perhaps we had.—Sir !"

Mr. Trotman called the sleeper gently.

"Sir Pushcott !"

There was no response.

"Sir Pushcott Bingley ! Sir !"

The Mayor touched him as respectfully as if he were a piece of damp toffee, or some one else's pocket handkerchief.

"Sir Push-cott !"

"Oh, yes, . . . I've been thinking. . . . Was I asleep ? No, surely ? Room a little warm. Headache. What time is it ? I must be going. Very many thanks for your hospitality,

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and help. Where is that young man, your son ? Alexander ? Yes. I should like to see him a moment. Don't trouble to come out. No, thank you, Your son will show me the way to my hotel, I've no doubt."

"I will do so myself."

"No. Pray don't trouble. Indeed ! Good-night. Good-night, Mrs. Trotman, and very many thanks. I will give myself the pleasure of calling to-morrow morning, when I have settled one or two matters. Now then, Mr. Alexander, if you please."

Thus neatly was the Mayor of Trowbury left behind. But all that Sir Pushcott Bingley said to Alec was :

"Well, and what do you think about it ?"

"Don't know," Alec appeared to reply.

"That's right," said Sir Pushcott with much tactful encouragement in his voice. "Now I want you to-morrow to write an article for the *Halfpenny Press* : 'How I Moved the Mountain,' or something like that. Tell the whole truth, you know. And make it crisp. Fulton will polish it up for you. Good-night, my boy. You don't seem to know that you are a celebrity . . ."

"I beg your pardon, sir ?"

"Never mind. Good-night. Take care of that digestion of yours. Come to the hotel and inquire for me to-morrow morning at a quarter to nine. You can ? Good-night."

Sir Pushcott Bingley had ten minutes talk with the *Halfpenny Press* man. Then the six-cylinder motor-car sped up to London, where Fulton dictated much important news to a linotype operator.

James Trotman questioned his son magisterially as to what the Director of the *Halfpenny Press* had said to him, and because Alec could give no coherent account of nothing in particular he was called a liar. His father, however, offered himself to help him with the article.

(To be continued)

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EDITORIAL: *THE CRITICAL ATTITUDE*—*Blue Water and the Thin Red Line*; *The Work of W. B. Yeats*, EDWARD GARNETT; *William Morris*, by EDWARD THOMAS; *The Work of W. H. Hudson*, by E. R.; *Some Notes on Present-day German Literature*, by DR. LEVIN LUDWIG SCHÜCKING; *The Literary and Economic Future of Liberal Mormonism*, by EDGAR JEPSON; *Capital Punishment in France*, by D. SIMONS

[We regret that owing to the exigencies of the American Copyright Act we are compelled at the last moment to hold back President Taft's article upon his election until the June number of THE ENGLISH REVIEW. To the May number, however, Mr. Taft will contribute an article on the subject of the Panama Canal.—ED.]

THE CRITICAL ATTITUDE

Blue Water and the Thin Red Line

It is well known in European diplomatic circles that British diplomatists talk too much ; it is unfortunately too well known in the same diplomatic circles that one of his Majesty's servants in a high place is, in his private conversations, instinct with a gloomy and panic-stricken fear of the German Empire. As this gentleman is very well informed, very well advised, and, except in the matter of conversation, a very discreet person, we may take this as a definite note in the sudden flame of panic that, carefully engineered by the two Front Benches in the House of Commons, is at this moment running through the country. That this nation should be quietly afraid of some Power is normal, usual, and perhaps desirable. For years it was Russia, but Russia being gone, to her succeeds Germany. Hitherto the responsible officials of a British Government have in the Houses of Parliament observed the decencies of diplomacy. Now—no doubt to get in touch with the methods of the daily Press—suddenly they have thrown reserve to the winds, and, in whatever way we look at it, we are governed by panic.

IN whatever way we look at it, for Mr. Asquith's sudden awakening to the fact that we are in danger from Prussia may well be genuine, or it may be merely the result of an agreement between himself and the leader of the Opposition—an agreement that it is necessary to rouse so enormous a wind of public opinion that the Navy Estimates may be carried in the face of the Government supporters who favour economy, leaving them breathless and afraid to speak.

WE may put it—and we are looking at the matter from a standpoint that, we are confident, is as aloof and as impartial as is practicable to mortal man—we may put it that a strong,

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an invulnerable Great Britain is essential to the peace of the world and to the future of civilisation. We must be strong; we must be immensely strong; we must be invulnerable, so that we may be tranquilly confident. We must be tranquilly confident, so that we may have time to think of other things than war. For what Great Britain stands for—what Great Britain has given to the world—is the science of living together. It has evolved nothing so great as its systems of legal procedure, as its methods of administration, as its social manners. We live so easily, one beside another, in England. This is the province of civilisation; this is civilisation itself. And it is this civilisation that, before all things, our Governments are elected to preserve.

ANY slackening in this ensurance of tranquillity, any wavering, and above all any panic, is the unpardonable crime in our Ministers. The unpardonable crime! It is, in fact, almost unthinkable that, during times of peace, a British Prime Minister should get up in the House of Commons and mention by name, in terms of fear, any single foreign Power. In whatever way we look at it, it is lamentable—in every way, except one, it is unpardonable. It is only pardonable if we are to imagine that Mr. Asquith, after consultation with the leaders of the Opposition, has determined to force on, at as early a moment as possible, a war with Germany. He may have realised that this is merely hastening on the inevitable; that this is merely getting the thing over and out of the way, so that we may go on towards our other destinies. He may have said: "If we go to war with Germany to-day we shall destroy for ever Germany as a naval Power. Let us do it while we are irresistible. Let us make short work of it, and hope for pardon before God, since it is the only way. Later it would mean an endless running struggle—a state of war for years."

THIS would be a miserable point of view, but it would be a comprehensible one. We use the word "miserable" merely in the sense of its being unhappy. For, attempting, in spite of the great difficulties that lie in our way, to attain to an absolutely impartial standpoint, to an attitude that is absolutely critical, we seem to see Great Britain drifting inevitably towards a war with Germany. There are a hundred factors that make for it; we can observe none which makes for peace. It should be remembered that in the matter of war we are an idealist nation;

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in the matter of war Germany, or at any rate Prussia, is a severely practical one. Prussia's business is so to run the German Empire that it shall pay, and the moment that a war appears likely to be commercially successful, then, immense, automatic, and having made certain that she is irresistible, Prussia will declare war. We are in no sense condemning Prussia. That is what she stands for ; that is what she is there for. And, in the infinite scale of things, who shall say that she, and not we, shall not stand for the ultimate good of humanity ?

BUT we stand for peace, and we must take our own part. What we need above everything is calmness—what we need above everything is the critical attitude. What we ought to fear before all things is panic. By putting the whole naval question upon a “Dreadnought” basis Mr. Asquith has fomented a panic. In this he may be right, he may be wrong. Taking into account our ships of war of the *Nelson* and other classes, we are still immeasurably stronger than Germany. By harping solely on the “Dreadnought” aspect Mr. Asquith has obscured this fact. We are not condemning him. Perhaps it was the only way in which, for the moment, he could be certain of ensuring that the Fleet should be sufficiently strengthened. But it is lamentable that this desirable end should not be attainable by other means than those of sensationalism. It is lamentable because the inevitable follower of sensation is reaction. In a little while we shall have sunk again into an attitude of indifference to our position in the world ; the word “Dreadnought” will—and this is the fatal symptom—evoke roars of laughter in music-halls. Later, again, will come another panic, will come some unfortunate incident, and then indeed Armageddon.

THE ENGLISH REVIEW stands for peace, for, as a writer on another page remarks, to peace Phidias belongs—it is only in times of peace that the arts flourish ; therefore our motives will hardly be doubted if we insist that this country must have the consciousness of invulnerability. At the same time, or at any rate at first glance, nothing ought to be more captivating to the intellect, or more easy to arrange, than an agreement between this country and the German Empire for the restriction of armaments. And once this country and the German Empire came to this agreement there is no doubt that all the other Powers, or at any rate all the other European Powers, would

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follow with relief our example. This agreement with Germany ought to be so easy to arrange. There are so many things in its favour. For, except in the matter of commerce, we have no contacts with the Germans, and, like Phidias, commerce belongs to peace. We have no coterminous boundaries. We are allied in race, in religion, and near in language. We have even a common difficulty in raising funds. We are the one a naval and the other a military people, and thus our possible spheres of aggression and acquisition are widely different. Prussia can hardly hope to acquire territory outside the continent of Europe. We cannot hope at all to take possession of any foot of European ground.

BUT, at any rate for the present, any such agreement would appear to be purely visionary. This is in part due to the psychologies of the respective peoples, in part to the necessities of the respective governing classes. We may say that in England it is, upon the whole, the lower classes who desire war with Germany. In Germany it is the upper strata of society who are the most bellicose. It is the professional classes, the military classes, the governing classes, and above all the professors. The German working man, with his dismal consciousness of the effects of direct taxation, is immensely afraid of war, with its charges; whereas the immense majority of the British nation, having no direct acquaintance with taxation, is, comparatively speaking, untouched by the thought of war. And this is one of the most dangerous factors of the situation. For in England the governing classes are, at moments, subject to this immense untaxed majority. In Germany, on the other hand, the governing classes—we imagine quite wrongly—consider that though they govern, they govern a country that is hostile to them. The German administrative class has, in fact, always in the corner of its eye the horrid bogey called Socialism, and at times it commits itself to repressive acts of the most ludicrous, in sheer panic before revolutionary movements which simply do not exist. The German governing class, therefore, does not view with disfavour any increase of our armaments, since the German people pays the bill for the increased forces with which it answers us. And similarly with the untaxed classes in England, who imagine that only the income-tax payer bears the brunt of military and naval charges. The German Government, in fact, views with favour any increase in our military or naval strength, since it gives them an excuse to enlarge their

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own forces—the forces that are aimed much more against the spectre of Socialism than against any foreign nation. It should be remembered, too, that although, as a distinguished writer in this Review has pointed out, the German Emperor may be taken to be friendly enough to this country, he has very largely lost control of events, and he may be expected still further to abstain from public manifestations. The Crown Prince, on the other hand, is a dark horse who grows daily in importance, and round the royal family is an inner ring who perpetually remind their masters that no Hohenzollern sovereign since Brandenburg was only the Mark—that no Hohenzollern sovereign has died without adding to the territories of Prussia.

AIMING as we do at spreading a greater comprehension of international characteristics, we see no use in blinking these facts, which may become factors of so much danger. Nothing could be more lamentable than a war between this country and Germany. Nothing could be more useless; nothing could be more harmful to civilisation. But nothing, on the other hand, is more inevitable if government by panic is to continue to be the characteristic of our age. The difference of national temperaments is, in the end, always the determining factor in international contacts. In an article by Dr. Schücking which we print in this number the difference between the Englishman and the German is very skilfully adumbrated. The German—or at any rate the Prussian—is more aggressive, but, since he lives so much less in crowds, he is much more stable. The Englishman is more peaceable normally, but acting and acted upon as he is in great numbers, his aggressions—when he is in an aggressive mood—are apt to be out of all proportion to his normal psychology. All the more important, therefore, all the more dire, is the responsibility of our governing class, with its powers of giving or withholding information, with its powers of awakening or dispelling popular emotions.

For we are coming nearer and nearer to government by panic. The governing class appeals more and more to sensationalism in order to attain its ends. We are no longer—if we ever were—ruled by men getting their inspiration from the great gods; we are cared for by unfortunate opportunists, who, whether they like it or not, are at the mercy of innumerable daily godlets.

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AND since the gods who preside over the fates of nations at large, over great causes, and the solemn endeavours of races—since these deities slumber for a time, how can we wonder that the merely quotidian godlets wake up and occupy the minds of men. We have been deeply immersed, to take this year alone, in a false disappearance from a motor-car, in a society divorce suit and apparently in nothing else. The King's visit to Berlin, foredoomed as it was to failure in bringing into any kind of friendly contact two nations in two different planes of civilisation, has left us more unmoved than it would have been possible to foresee. It is, perhaps, hardly to be lamented. That nation, it is said, is happy which has no history; perhaps that city is fortunate whose denizens can afford, for lack of great subjects, to devote their attention to quite tiny matters.

AND yet we doubt. For—perhaps, because they have so little time to think—our quotidian gods seem of necessity to vulgarise all that they inspire. So that when we said that—until yesterday—there had occurred in the course of the year nothing that would seem to influence the fate of the nation, we did not say it in haste. Inspired by the merely diurnal deities, the Territorial emotion was, lamentably, a vulgar shiver that already has passed away. Lamentably, since, in itself the emotion was a fine one. But the presentation! . . .

THIS is an age of scepticism, of inquiry, even of experiment. That Tariff Reform will come (how the great men of the eighties would have started at the mere hint of such a belief!) we may regard as certain. But it will come in, not supported by any great breath of faith. It will be there on trial. That a certain measure of compulsory military service will be forced upon us, that, also, we may consider to be likely. Here, again, the men of the eighties would rub incredulous eyes. We remember to have heard a great man of that date relate an anecdote. It was to the effect that towards 1882 Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke came to him for advice; they desired to know whether the time had not come to declare Great Britain a Republic? Exactly how it may be with Sir Charles Dilke to-day we do not know, but what would the Mr. Chamberlain of 1882 have thought if it had been declared to him that the possible first president of the British Republic—and without doubt Mr. Chamberlain would have been the first president of the

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British Republic—was inevitably to become the great protagonist of Protection?

WE use the word “inevitably” because Mr. Chamberlain, a great Politician and in no particular sense a Statesman, has always been from the nature of his singular gifts very much in touch with his time. In tune with the country, he prevented the granting of Home Rule to Ireland; in tune with the country, which was already beginning to react against the academic tyrannies of the Victorian Age; against the theory of a sacrosanct democracy; against the theory that the arts of peace were sacrosanct, and sacrosanct too the dogmas of the Manchester school and the Humanitarians—in touch, in fact, with a nation that required something romantic, something emotional, something that was different from the chilly and academic theories of the Victorian dogmatists, he gave us the Boer War which swept away, as if with one breath, nearly all traces of Victorian culture. And having got so far with this reaction in the direction of the man in the street, having swept away alike the Great Figure, and the Great Figure’s hold upon popular imagination—for this, with its hundred disillusionments, was what the Boer War really did—Mr. Chamberlain, seizing on the one cry which always appeals to the man in the street, the cry of “Damn the foreigner!” Mr. Chamberlain has given us Protection.

WE wish to emphasise the fact that we are in no way condemning this great politician. We are merely attempting to analyse the phenomenon that he is. He has given us Government by the man in the street: he has given us, that is to say, Government by the uncritical. For the man in the street is essentially the uncritical man. He has common sense; but being founded not upon experience, but upon the emotion of the day that puts always one side of the question out of all proportion, his common sense does not go beyond the end of his nose: he has passions, but, these being the passions only of the day, bear him hither and thither and negative themselves. He has information, but its sources are tainted by the interests of the men who supply it. He has knowledge, but, since his knowledge is only the knowledge of the day, he has no means of knowing what may be the ultimate tendency of any measure that he may enact; and, since he acts, in the matter of Government, in a crowd, the passions that sway him must be exaggerated, and exaggerated too will his actions be. Above all he is desultory.

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ALL these things are very strongly represented in what we may call "the late Territorial excitement"; the vulgarisation, the sudden enthusiasm and the decay of that enthusiasm crowding very close upon each other's heels. That a measure of compulsory military service is a desirable thing we are very far from denying. The only fear that we should have would be that compulsory service might give rise to the social devil of militarism. But militarism is a vice so far removed from the English character (if only because the Englishman shrinks so automatically from any personal display) that we should be ready to incur the risk of militarism for the sake of the certain benefits that would ensue from the enactment of a measure having for its principle the idea that every citizen owes some service to the State. Upon the benefits that would ensue, we have not at the moment the space to dilate. Let us, therefore, take them for granted and, imagining compulsory service to be beneficial, let us examine the effects of the late Territorial agitation.

FOMENTED by organs that are accustomed to raise periodical agitations as to the works of clairvoyants, as to illusory invasions, massacres of Europeans in China that do not exist, or as to machinations of gigantic trusts that equally have no existence—fomented by such organs of opinion, the Territorial agitation will be kept going only by men who are in tune with these fugitive organs and must obviously go the way of, let us say, the craze about the Zanzics. Anxious to make his hay whilst his short sun shines, the minister responsible hectically welcomes these singular allies. He bursts into tumultuous speech; he summons to his aid the music-halls; he lends indeed, troops to the very music-halls themselves. At one of the London places of entertainment, there was presented an extraordinary patriotic interlude for which the title was something like "England Invaded—As it Would be and As it Ought to be." Here upon the bioscope we are shown the invasion of a foreign army—enacted by British dragoons and others, the hauling down of the British flag from above a Golf club, the ruthless execution of innocent golfers, the rough handling of women by barbarous officers got up to represent militarists who are one half Cossack and one half Imperial German Bodyguard. The next scene, however, represents the invasion repelled as it should be if the Minister of War and the halfpenny papers had their way. Here are the same Golf club, the same Union Jack, the same obviously foreign ladies sitting on the club-house steps. But upon the

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first landing of the enemy, the golfers rush into the club-house and, having donned, in a miraculously short space of time, the correct uniforms of Territorials, they proceed, to the number of half a dozen, in open order, rather cramped for the convenience of the bioscope operator, to hold back the combined Tartar-Teuton invading forces until the British regulars, this time in their own uniform, and without Muscovite beards and Prussian parade helmets, find it convenient to appear upon the scene. Afterwards a robust gentleman, with a robust voice sings a patriotic song, the words of whose burden are flashed upon the bioscope-sheet for the benefit of those brave souls, who desire to join in the chorus.

AND then comes the lamentable reaction—for the man in the street, if he have no critical attitude, has his exceeding cold fits that follow his wild enthusiasms. And these cold fits of cockney-criticism are, because they are founded on indifference, so infinitely damaging. Mr. Haldane has got his ten thousand men, but very shortly his friends, the music-hall audiences, will jeer as loudly at the name "Territorial" as they do now at the name of "Suffragette." Indeed, at one of Mr. Haldane's tied-houses,—(though perhaps, we should call it by now a "free house") a very dismal sketch is being enacted. It shows us an officer of the army got up to represent poor, good Lord Roberts. This officer is mad about foreign invasions. He has trained his footmen, his cooks, his gardeners, his stable-washers to fall in at the sound of the bugle and night-long to parade his garden and grounds. The officer's daughter however loves, and is beloved by the Baron von Something of Berlin and very shortly the Baron, in spite of sentries, mines and outposts, scales the garden-wall in the full uniform of an officer of the Bonn Cuirassiers. By merely drawing his sword and making faces, he puts to flight the colonel's armed forces. The daughter falls into the Baron's arms. And then the Baron whistles and—at this moment the enthusiasm of the audience passed beyond all bounds—German troops rush upon the stage. We must confess ourselves to have been filled with a certain patriotic disgust at this spectacle. But there the audience was, cheering to the echo the sight of German forces invading an Englishman's home.

It is true that shortly afterwards the German forces turned out to be merely a detachment of General Baden-Powell's

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dismal little scarecrows masquerading as German soldiers. But there the thing was. The audience, in their hot desire to see true lovers united, had let go by the board Mr. Haldane, Lord Roberts, the Territorials, and the Englishman's Home itself.

THE uncritical attitude! The uncritical attitude! For just consider the whole matter with Mr. Haldane as the centre of the piece, and the friends of compulsory service left lamentably high and dry. Mr. Haldane wanted a few thousand men to bolster up a lost reputation. The halfpenny Press having no Chinese Massacre, no Zanzics, no divorce suit, requires a new craze. They get it, and at what cost? For the play called *An Englishman's Home*, with its imbecile happy ending, can only, by any thinkable possibility, pander to the shiftless reassurance of the man in the street who at times wakes up and has a finger in the pie. If only the author of this play could have shown us a London such as Paris was, an England such as France was, after 1870, if he could have shown us the black desolation, the bitter dejection that succeed a foreign invasion, then, indeed, Mr. Haldane might not have got his ten thousand recruits in London, but we might have been some hundred thousand of votes nearer to a national army. And, indeed, we need a national army, simply because we stand in a different plane of civilisation from almost all our neighbours, and, since we are more peace-loving, since we are more civilised, we must be prepared, for the sake of humanity to be able, not only to maintain ourselves but to maintain the integrity of the nations most allied to us in the love for peace and civilisation. That is the cock we owe to Æsculapius, the duty of an Imperial race; for France is disarming—there is no doubt, that France is disarming—and there lies the great danger to the peace of humanity, since France is the only other nation that is at all in the same plane of civilisation as ourselves. And, for all the good that France has done us, we owe her at least the reward—of an example. F.

DRAMA

HENRY JAMES: *The High Bid*. JOHN GALSWORTHY: *Strife*.

BUT the Englishman's home! Let us again consider this whole affair with critical minds. Some uneasy feeling must have pervaded the being of the Minister for War—some

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uneasy feeling that, in the minds of his music-hall friends, a reaction would ensue, that upon the arrival say, of a Lama from Tibet with powers to raise the dead, the halfpenny press would desert this sensation—Mr. Haldane, with this uneasy consciousness, determines to call to his aid, *all* his Majesty's forces. Mrs. Partington attempted to repel the Atlantic with a broom. Mr. Haldane calls to his aid—Mr. Redford! The forces of nature could no further go in the direction of the ridiculous, and so we have Mr. Pélassier of "The Follies," as a new Beaumarchais, as a national saviour. For Mr. Pélassier performs his parody of the sacrosanct play behind the curtain so that the audience is delighted by all the howls and the bangs of a sanguinary invasion.

POOR Mr. Redford! What cruel fate drags this unfortunate city gentleman again and again, and always ridiculously before the curtain? Can it be the Divine Destiny of the Greek Tragedy which he censured? Can it be the muse of the drama converting itself for the time into some august and insatiable nemesis, that thus pursues this sorry Pandar to the uncritical tendencies of his time?

THALIA, indeed, does seem to have turned herself into a nemesis of the ridiculous if not into an Oberon providing men with asses' heads to be the loves of the delicate Titanias of the Press. In both senses *An Englishman's Home* is surely bottom. And what of the top? The Stage Society lately gave a performance of a play by Turgenieff. Said a distinguished dramatic critic: "This play is life. Its characters are real men and women. Its situations are such as would occur in real life. It is in consequence a sordid nightmare, and we regret that the Stage Society should have sullied its annals," etc. We wonder if the home life of this gentleman is *really* so unfortunate?

The same gentleman's comment upon Mr. James's *The High Bid* was to the effect that, whereas the play was mostly incomprehensible, such episodes as he was able to follow were not such as happened in real life, and he regretted, therefore, that Mr. Forbes Robertson should have sullied his reputation by producing such trivia after the earnest moralities of *The Third Floor Back*. So that, finding this sudden change in his attitude

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towards life—which on one day was a horrid nightmare, and on the next had become a thing too sacred for the defiling touch of Mr. James—we are driven almost to the conclusion that the critic inhabits Mr. Jerome's boarding-house and, between witnessing Turgenieff's play and *The High Bid*, those fellow boarders of his who had previously resembled Turgenieff's dissipated characters had been looked upon by the converting eyes of Mr. Forbes Robertson.

Actually *The High Bid*, charmingly put upon the stage as it was, and charmingly played, was a delightful entertainment. If it was nothing more, it was—quite beautifully, nothing less. As practical drama it was a great improvement on *Guy Domville* with which, so many years ago, Mr. Alexander so lamentably came to grief. It differed from *Guy Domville* in this, that if its subtleties at times obscured the states of mind of the characters, they did not interfere at the moments of action in the play. The distinguished dramatic critic, to whom we have referred, whose idea of action was attained at its high-water mark when Mr. Lewis Waller, seizing a grand piano by one leg, and whirling it round his head, disposed of the seven assassins who had penetrated the lovely lady's boudoir—this distinguished critic, along with most of his *confrères*, stated that the only action in *The High Bid* was when Mr. Forbes Robertson went upstairs. But Mr. James's play, though nobody actually was knocked down except the house called Covering-End, which fell to the high bid of the lady from Something-Top, was full of psychological action. It rippled on and on to its climax, and, what was so delightful, Mr. Robertson, whom so few parts suit, had a part which suited him down to the ground. He was exactly what was wanted of him, and the play was so exactly what he wanted. He is so nice, and the play exactly permitted him to be himself. We were convinced, from the moment when he entered, that indeed, Mr. Robertson, somewhere in the very far background, has an ancestral home of his own with an almost equally charming Ian Robertson for butler. And, whilst doing his slum work with the *Passing of the Third Floor Back*, which has made him a little tired—we wonder it hasn't made him infinitely more tired—a little tentative, a little dubious, and always very gentle, hasn't the lady from Something-Top been down to Mr. Robertson's Covering-End and taken possession? Hasn't she, indeed, taken possession of Mr. Forbes Robertson too, and don't we see her there just beautifully running him? And how wonderful

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of Mr. James to discover, with those magical eyes of his, the secret of Mr. Forbes Robertson's past.

THE only disappointing thing about Mr. Galsworthy's play on the 9th was that the audience consisted so entirely of intellectuals. One would wish it to be within the reach of and to be appreciated by all classes. This it undoubtedly would be if it were put in the evening bill, for although it contains no vestige of the "love interest" without which, the critics are always telling us, no play can be sat through, as far as the "machinery" goes it keeps up till the final tap of the last words. For our readers it is obviously unnecessary to detail the plot. The cast was harmoniously proportioned, but at the first performance Mr. Norman McKinnel played very slowly and Miss Lillah McCarthy had a touch of melodrama in her acting.

The method of Mr. Granville Barker's production is extremely realistic, but he has introduced too many long silences—as it were the angel passing through the room at each third division of the hour. In the theatre, when we are strung up to so very different a key, so exact a reproduction of the immaterial details of the life we live is out of tune. Indeed, even in the Viennese modern theatres, where, many years ago, these effects were aimed at, they have lately been abandoned.

Technically, *Strife* is Mr. Galsworthy's most satisfying performance. His peculiar method of perpetually contrasting black with white, sympathetic speeches with actions of the least imaginative—this method, which in the case of his novels tends to become hard and mechanical, is the exactly right means of attack in the theatre. The audience never had any chance to be in doubt as to what Mr. Galsworthy was "getting at": there is the incident, there is the incident that comments upon it, and incident and comment right to the end of the chapter. And to have perceived this is Mr. Galsworthy's great achievement. Indeed, it is the reason why the daily Press has so lavishly praised the play. Even the critic to whom we have formerly alluded could not miss the tranquil lucidity or the beautiful pity of Mr. Galsworthy's outlook on life. That was why Mr. Fisher White drew tears. L.

The Work of W. B. Yeats*

By Edward Garnett

It is rare that in a poet's lifetime we see brought together, in definite compass, all the materials necessary for a literary portrait of his aims and creed. Perhaps it is not ill that in the case of our great poets Chaucer and Shakespeare their comments and explanations of their own practice and theory have sunk to the bottom of Time's stream, whence, after generations of dragging and dredging, no pearls have been fished up, but a few dubious scraps of oyster-shell. Mr. Yeats however, as a leader and spokesman of the Irish Literary Movement, addresses us from the centre of the stage, and it is therefore fitting that this Collected Edition of his Works should bring together not only his Poems and Plays, but his literary criticisms and Apologia for his school. Assuredly literary critics of the future will owe Mr. Bullen great gratitude for his achievement of planning and publishing these beautifully printed volumes, which all bibliophiles of foresight must hasten to lay hands on.

Mr. Yeats' place among the English poets is so indisputably assured that, taking for granted the common appeal his poems and plays make on all educated lovers of poetry, I purpose only considering here, briefly, what his figure, his aims and achievement signify in relation to their background of Irish literature and life.

How strange, in the thick of the Nationalist fray, amid the din of the in-and-out fighting of Irish party strife, after long years when the twin sisters, Literature and Art, dragged into the political arena, have been bidden to dance the national hornpipe while the politicians piped the tune—how strange, I repeat, is the apparition of this poet, consumed with the pure flame of the æsthetic ideal even as Keats was consumed. And yet a poet intensely national as Keats never was. Those who have denied that Mr. Yeats' genius is Celtic Irish, and those who have accused him of being a bad patriot, have been blinded by the whirling dust of the national fight. His poetic and patriotic creed is one and indivisible and he has held it up

* "The Collected Works in Verse and Prose of William Butler Yeats." Stratford-on-Avon: The Shakespeare Head Press. 1908. Eight volumes.

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to his countrymen in his critical writings as he has shaped it creatively in his plays and poems :

The Greeks, the only perfect artists of the world, looked within their own borders, and we, like them, have a history fuller than any modern history of imaginative events, and legends which surpass, as I think, all legends but theirs in wild beauty ; and in our land, as in theirs, there is no river or mountain that is not associated in the memory with some event or legend ; while political reasons have made love of country, as I think, even greater among us than among them. I would have our writers and craftsmen of many kinds master the history and these legends, and fix upon their memory the appearance of mountains and rivers and make it visible again in their arts, so that Irishmen, even though they be gone thousands of miles away, could still be in their own country. Whether they chose for the subject the carrying off of the Brown Bull, or the coming of Patrick, or the political struggle of later times, the other world comes so much into it all that their love of it would move in their hands also, and as much, it may be, as in the hands of the Greek craftsmen. In other words, I would have Ireland re-create the ancient arts, the arts as they were understood in Judæa, in India, in Scandinavia, in Greece and Rome, in every ancient land ; as they were understood when they moved a whole people and not a few people who have grown up in a leisured class and made this understanding their business.—“ Ireland and the Arts,” vol. vi. p. 252.

How significant is the rebirth of the artist, spiritually the child of generations of poets and pure artists, of pagan, Christian and Mediæval Ireland, whose art honoured Ireland and brought her honour. In the last hundred years the incessant clash and din of politics, practical and impracticable, have nigh banished the pure poets and artists and driven them from their country, which is the natural home of a race of artists. So it is that the modern Irishman demands of every book or work of art produced in the land, not—is it true? is it beautiful? but—is it patriotic? And so it is that the art of Mr. Yeats, devoted to and inspired by an ancient Celtic spirit of beauty, has evoked patriotic complaints, opposition or cold indifference from his countrymen to whom it brings honour.

To the critic, however, the significant fact is that Mr. Yeats' genius is the latest blossoming and fruiting of the ancient, most persistent roots of Irish feeling in literature. There is, I believe, no parallel in European literature to the strange hold the Ossianic Cycle of Romance took on the Irish imagination. “ There was probably not a century from the seventh to the eighteenth in which new stories, poems, redactions and sagas concerning Finn and the Fenians were not invented and put in circulation. . . . Of the miscellaneous sagas some deal with post-Danish, and still fewer with post-Norman subjects. The seventh century was the golden age of the Irish saga, and nothing that the race did in later times improved upon it,” says Dr. Douglas Hyde in his “ Literary History of Ireland.” And Mr. Eoin MacNeill, in

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"The Book of the Lays of Finn," says, "the legend of the Fiauna remained always modern, not only in its language but in the sense of being entirely the property of each generation of story-tellers and ballad-makers. In this way it retained the power of constantly and freely assimilating new elements." Substitute for "the legends of the Fiauna" "the old Irish sagas and folk-legends" and we have a most curious example in Mr. Yeats of this ever-assimilative yet highly conservative tradition in Irish literature. For the old Irish sagas and folk-legends have retained the power of freely assimilating the new elements in Mr. Yeats' poetry. The modern self-consciousness of its style, its love of symbolism, the exquisite harmonies of his late Elizabethan blank verse : all these have been assimilated by the spirit of ancient Celtic "magic" in his verse.

Of course when we touch on the blend of spirit form and matter that has gone to the shaping of a work of literary genius we are like puzzled gossips who catch in the child's voice or lift of the head the very voice or lift of the head of some dead forbear. It is the same, yet all is somehow different, even when the old stocks reassert themselves in the miracle of new-born flesh or in the new fibres of individual genius. And some of us are jealous for the savage austerity, barbaric wildness and dewy freshness of Early Irish literature, even when we bow our heads before the magic spells woven in *Deirdre*, and *On Baile's Strand*, and with senses enmeshed, float, dreaming, down the tide of his dangerous wizard art. What has befallen the heroic pagan queen of "The Exile of the Sons of Usnach," whom so many generations have loved, that we have this modern wraith of Deirdre to puzzle and enchant us ?

DEIRDRE.

Do you remember that first night in the woods
We lay all night on leaves, and looking up
When the first grey of the dawn awoke the birds,
Saw leaves above us. You thought that I still slept,
And bending down to kiss me on the eyes,
Found they were open. Bend and kiss me now,
For it may be the last before our death.
And when that's over we'll be different ;
Imperishable things, a cloud or a fire.
And I know nothing but this body, nothing
But that old vehement, bewildering kiss.

And Naisi, that heroic, kingly youth, this is not the voice of

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the hero, "melodious like the sound of the wave," which speaks to us when, with Deirdre, he awaits death :

NAISI.

What do they say ?

That Lugaidh Redstripe and that wife of his
Sat at this chessboard, waiting for their end.
They knew that there was nothing that could save them,
And so played chess as they had any night
For years, and waited for the stroke of sword.
I never heard a death so out of reach
Of common hearts, a high and comely end :
What need have I, that gave up all for love,
To die like an old king out of a fable,
Fighting and passionate ? What need is there
For all that ostentation at my setting ?
I have loved truly and betrayed no man.
I need no lighting at the end, no beating
In a vain fury at the cage's door.

What literary enchantments of our self-conscious age with drops distilled of Italian Renaissance poison mingle in the last pages of *Deirdre* ? And yet, and yet, what twilight magical shadows of the poet's imagination steal in dusky flood over the old stories, in his reshaping ! For pure beauty of atmosphere, form and colour, for grave and tender cadences, the blank verse of these four plays [vol. ii.] is unmatched in modern English literature, and let the Irish reader mark that it is that very literature of the invaders (who so long disdained and sought indeed to destroy and root out the literature of the Gael) which is now invaded and conquered by the Gaelic legends reborn in these dramatic songs and sagas. It is, in one sense, the long-delayed mating of two literatures that finds issue in Mr. Yeats' consummate artistic form. But his subject-matter is the child of the Celtic imagination, and its spirit is the antique breath of Celtic magic.

Instinctively or not, in this mating between the Celtic-Irish spirit and the English tongue Mr. Yeats has struck a balance between many conflicting forces, chief of which are old Irish Romance feeling, Celtic-Irish peasant-folk lore and Elizabethan forms of verse : of necessity his achievement has been that of throwing a bridge between the genius of the ancient Gaels and the modern temperament. And in striking this literary balance he has laid himself open to the indifference or censure of many

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forces of latterday Irish feeling, Catholic, Protestant or sectarian, Nationalist or Anglo-Irish, forces that do not derive from, or have little affinity with, the genius of Celtic-Irish tradition. The point would be one not worth the making if it were not an apt illustration of the fact so common in literary history, viz., the indifference or hostility of a community to genius new-born in its midst, and its canonisation of the same genius after death, the fact being, we surmise, that genius in life collides with forms, feeling and forces in a nation's life with which temperamentally it has nothing to do, but that after death it attracts to itself, like a magnet, the very forces in the national thought and emotion with which it is akin. Thus a Keats, who is English-Celtic, could only enter into his heritage of popularity by slow degrees. By this theory we would expect Mr. Yeats' works to be some time in reaching the substratum of Celtic-Irish feeling in the nation which it has sprung from and appeals to, as in the din of political controversy, as we have said, the national energies have combined together to strangle the pure poet and artist. In our poet is a rebirth of that ancient caste of bard which ranked next to the priestly caste in old Irish Society. And bewitched by the verbal sorceries of his poems and plays we are transported back to those misty centuries when the poet was known as a great magician among men. Yes, they were mighty wizards who forged for us the two cycles of Irish saga, and this poet who has appeared among us is their spiritual descendant, the last born of a noble line.

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William Morris *

By Edward Thomas

By ransacking Mr. Mackail's book on William Morris it ought to have been possible to make an interesting little volume for the "English Men of Letters" series. Mr. Noyes has not done this. He has given us a slight and incomplete outline of Morris's life, and filled it in with critical remarks in an awkward and flighty prose, and the book has no merit even of a pedestrian kind. But he drags his admiration of Tennyson several times into this small book, and thus raises afresh a question which no one wishes to leave for posterity to settle. In his chapter on "The Defence of Guenevere" he speaks of that poem as "in some ways one of the sweetest flowers of Morris's work" and continues :

"Had it been welcomed enthusiastically on its first appearance it could only have been on false grounds. The atmosphere had not yet been created in which it could live and breathe naturally. There was, however, during the inevitable reaction against the overpowering weight and splendour of Tennyson's work, a kind of artistic snobbery abroad which would vaguely proclaim Morris's first little book to be a mysterious revelation of some one true Church of Arthurianism unknown to the great poet's more mundane mind. . . ."

But as elsewhere in the book, when a difficulty arises Mr. Noyes is unable, being in a hurry and imperfectly skilled in English prose, to say what he means. This is particularly regrettable in the case of the comparison between Morris and Tennyson in their treatment of the Arthurian tales because it is a matter which has been discussed acrimoniously but never in a precise and sufficient manner. Mr. Noyes asks us to compare "Two red roses across the moon" with "So all day long the noise of battle rolled"—which is not criticism but partisanship of the least serious kind. He also says later that Morris's mediævalism "does not actually come nearer to the real life of the Middle Ages than does the unaffectedly modern speech of Tennyson's Idylls. Women's necks in the Middle Ages were not really longer or their feet thinner than they are to-day. . . ."

* "William Morris," by Alfred Noyes. (London: Macmillan and Co.)

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It is hard to take seriously a writer who talks of Tennyson's "unaffectedly modern speech," but we seem to see at the back of his mind a point which he might reasonably have attempted to make. He might have claimed that Tennyson, "with his great lovable simplicity and real kingliness of soul," came and, himself a man of his age and representing it, gave to these old tales a new life especially suited to that age, and that Morris fell short of this. But we think that Tennyson made two grave and indeed fatal mistakes. First he must have undervalued Malory's "Le Morte d'Arthur." Malory may not have been a great writer, but his book is a great book, one of the half-dozen or so great books in English Prose of the class of "The Bible," "The Anatomy of Melancholy," "The History of the Great Rebellion," "Tom Jones," "Boswell's Johnson," books of great size and inexhaustible suggestiveness. Had Tennyson perceived its true value he could never have ventured to pilfer from it with such rapacity, taking not only the groundwork of whole tales, the striking incidents, speeches, pictures, but the very phrases and words, to such an extent that we can scarcely believe it possible for a man to enjoy "Le Morte d'Arthur" without discarding "The Idylls of the King" as a whole. The second mistake is implicit in the first. Tennyson over-estimated the content of the tales. He thought them capable of expanding to his epic needs, and of gaining a new modern significance while retaining the old charm. Perhaps they were capable of even greater expansion, but his method seems to us to have burst them. For he did not re-create, but versified and poetised them instead, translated them into the melodious Tennysonian tongue. We do not dispute his marvellous virtuosity, and that learned skill in which he appears to rank with Milton. In line after line, and in the whole of "The Passing of Arthur," this is conspicuous. In Tennyson's day Malory was far less known than now and there is little doubt that the Idylls created his vogue. But the fact is now that once we have read Malory we read Tennyson chiefly to see what he has done with his material, and what he has done is to decorate and obscure the quaint, the romantic, the ineffably simple, with a vaguely solemn morality, much dignity and much melody of words. And if it is true of all or nearly all the twelve books that they challenge with so little success a comparison with their originals, that they are elaborated and elevated to a point beyond what they will bear, it is far more true of the whole if taken as an epic. Guenevere's father in "Le Morte d'Arthur" is a ghost with a pleasant name, but in Tennyson's "Leodegran the King of Cameliant" is a *mannequin*

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d'osier whose presence at the opening of the first book is only too significant of this attempt to turn a manor-house into a palace by enlarging it. The inconsequent, rambling, confused, imperfect tales of the old book refuse to live in this "unaffectedly modern speech" and consciously invented golden age. The poet tries to naturalise the shadowy Arthur but succeeds only in making of him and his Court an uncertain allegory—that is, in destroying them. He allegorises where Malory makes unconscious symbols of great power, and in nothing is the laureate's inferiority so clear.

"The Defence of Guenevere" and the other Arthurian pieces in the same volume may be the work of a lesser man. We contend that they are the work of a man who avoided the two mistakes of Tennyson. As Mr. Noyes justly says, he is not more truly mediæval than Tennyson, nor did he try to be. But while Tennyson places his knights and ladies in a No Man's Land of his own invention, modernised by the approximation of Arthur to Albert the Good, although his historical knowledge seems to dispose him to connect it with Britain at the period of the Saxon invasion, Morris on the other hand attempts no consistency, uses the Wiltshire Downs as a scene, makes Guenevere speak simply as a passionate woman, and allows us to see all the time that he is dreaming short dreams inspired by his master Malory. He enlarges upon a suggestion from "*Le Morte d'Arthur*," he invents, he mixes his knowledge of the Middle Ages, of painting, of chivalry, of devotion, in a manner which by its confusion of several ages reminds us of Malory himself and yet never competes with him. It is a narrow but an intensely realised dream-world, this of Morris's, which immediately engulfs the reader, holds him secure for a little while and then sets him free. Morris had not such a big box of paints as Tennyson but he used them at least in these poems with more magic, with the magic of a vivid personal experience in the imaginative world such as appears to have been denied to Tennyson. The Celts, we are always being told, can do nothing big and prolonged, and apparently their legends trip up even a poet like Tennyson, who is not a Celt, when he attempts something big with them. Celt or not, Morris had a surer taste. He made no attempt to naturalise Arthur, to lift him out of the ruinous dreams of "*Le Morte d'Arthur*" or the "*Mabinogion*." Still less did he make an allegory. Not once, we believe, in reading these poems can you become conscious, as continually in reading "*The Idylls of the King*," that they are a re-handling of old matters, certainly not that they are a mere poetisation. They are

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not mediæval, nor modern, but the work of a thoroughly modern man deeply and intelligently concerned with mediæval things and things of no age, and he gives them a vivid dream-life. Tennyson also was a modern man of culture, but in his "Idylls of the King" he undertook to produce by an intellectual process of reconstruction what only imagination could have succeeded in. His knights and ladies have therefore no life at all except what they retain from Malory's page. Morris creates a world or a fragment of one which we cannot and do not feel compelled to try to locate. Tennyson makes one which it is fatally disappointing not to be able to locate. On some such grounds as these we are disposed to rank ourselves with the snobs whom Mr. Noyes contemns for placing Morris's Arthurian poems above Tennyson's.

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The Work of W. H. Hudson

THAT saint was one of the best beloved who was called "of the birds." That author is one of the best beloved we have, whom we picture—don't we see him?—walking, silent, in a tranquil garden, towards evening, peering up at the families of swifts—"never more than eight"—that career with shrill and ecstatic shrieks around the tower of the church he served, or walking, a book in his clasped hands behind his back, with softened footfalls to watch the thrushes on the lawn, running with their suddenly arrested dashes, beside the sundial that marked hours so serene. We may say that all humanity loves a lover of birds. St. Francis preached to them; Gilbert White moved amongst them with softened footfalls and tranquil attention. And perhaps the image that most appeals to us of an omnipotent and a tender Creator is that of Him Who feeds the young ravens in their nests and has attention for the fall of a sparrow.

No doubt we love the lovers of birds not so much because we ourselves love the little people of heaven and earth as because for the successful watching by hedgerows certain lovable qualities are necessary—certain qualities of self-effacement, of patience, of tranquil observation, and of quiet movement. If, in fact, we do not desire, in the woods or the open, to startle little and easily frightened beings, we *must* possess those actual qualities. There must be nothing staccato in our motions; there must be nothing fugitive in our visits.

If we walk along a wood-path all the busy life around us will continue unconcerned and at no great distance—for just so long as we continue moving. But the moment that we come to a sudden halt we shall hear the rustle of fugitive wings, the sibilant and special alarm-cry of the robin will replace the conversational chatter of many small birds. Similarly, upon the ploughed downs, so long as we continue to walk upon our business the plover near at hand will run upon its own affairs or sit still in the furrows. But if we come to a sudden halt the plovers will flap all across the skies, the rooks fly away down the hill, and the partridges, with their startled skimming, brush over the nearest ridge. We shall have disturbed the rhythm of life.

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To avoid causing this disturbance a man must be either a person who comes to a halt very gradually or one who comes so often that he will be accepted and be granted, as it were, the freedom of coppice or of furrow. The birds must, in fact, get used to seeing him about until they come to regard him, not as a marauder or a spy, but as one whose business it is to be abroad, motionless and silent in the solitudes. For this there are necessary a patience and a pensiveness that, in a restless age, we find attractive, and this, perhaps, is why we love bird-watchers, whether or no we love birds or have the faculties ourselves to watch successfully.

We may regard "Green Mansions" as revealing the secret of Mr. Hudson's personality. It is the story of a man who goes into a forest, in beneath the huge boughs that are the mansions for so many beings. And here, in the green twilight, going often and steadfastly, he is aware of a voice, a bird-voice, that, invisible in its origin, dogs his footsteps, in the secret places of Ecuador, as here at home in a coppice the robin will accompany us, flitting from bush to bush, invisible and uttering its sweet cry, half of warning, half of companionship. The man goes often and often into the forest, and at last, shyly and capriciously, the being of the bird-voice reveals herself to him. She is a woman with the spirit of a bird, with the elusive charm, with the tender and fluttering mind, with the coloured and tenuous form, with the fluting and thrilling voice. In the soul of the man there arises an immense, an overpowering passion for this bird-creature, for this protectress of all living things of the forest, for this spirit-woman who is at one with all perching, fluttering, and creeping things. And when—since union between man and spirit is in the nature of things impossible—the man loses the wood-being he is filled for ever with a pervading, an endless regret.

That is Mr. Hudson. He reveals himself: he shows us in the book the nature of the dream that he has dreamed. He is—in his being as an author—a man, silent, hungry-eyed, filled with a regret and with an ideal. The ideal is to find a Being with whom he may be at one, a Being who, in return, will be at one with all the creatures of all the Green Mansions of the world. The regret is that he is born a man, since to man this union cannot ever be granted.

So we may picture him, silent, devoured by a passion, standing by a hedgerow, gazing in between the leaves, into the deep and glamorous interior, watching hungrily the little creatures who flutter about the hem of invisible garments.

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This, of course, is a picture of the being who seems to look out at us from the pages of the books, not of the Mr. Hudson who walks the streets of London Town, or sits watching the gulls from a rock on the Lizard. A writer reveals himself in his books as distinct from the writer in his person, the Rousseau who is shadowed in the "*Nouvelle Héloïse*" being different enough from the unpleasing person who abandoned his children on the doorsteps of orphanages. Nor yet is this picture of a hungry and silent man by a hedgerow any more than a partial portrait of a phase. There is the gallant and amorous horseman of the "*Purple Land*," with many loves and jingling spurs, up to the eyes in South American revolutions, outwitting the bulls of the pampas, bronzed in the tropical sunlight. There is the genial and sardonic traveller who troubles with his appearance the uneasy minds of tramps on the South Downs. There is the indignant Mr. Hudson of "*Birds in London*," fulminating against the park vandals who condemned the tall elms in Kensington Gardens; there is the Mr. Hudson who, uneasily, if gallantly, tries to make a good case for the inhabitants of Cornwall, writing, as it were, amiable compliments to the Celts with his right hand, whilst with his left he sets down instances of their cruelty, so convincingly rendered that they remain like shuddering patches in our memories.*

And, after all, it is the power to render convincingly circumstances observed with zest that most surely makes us know a writer, and, if he be lovable, makes us love him. The admirers of Mr. Hudson are, relatively speaking, a small band, but we fancy that they are a band inspired with more gratitude for pleasures received and with more affection than fall to the common lot of writers. It is very likely that the majority of Mr. Hudson's champions have been roused to affection for him by this first passage from "*Nature in Downland*," the introduction to the book, the passage that gives the tone, that sets the pace, that affords a taste of the personality:

"Here" (where Kingston Down slopes away towards the valley of the Ouse), "sitting on the dry grass with my face to the wind, I spent two or three hours in gazing at the thistledown. It is a rare thing to see as I saw it that day: the sight of it was a surprise, and I gave myself up to the pleasure of it, wishing for no better thing. It was not only that the sight was beautiful, but the scene was vividly reminiscent of long-gone summer days associated in the memory with the silvery thistledown. The wide extent of unenclosed and untilled

* "*The Land's End*" (Hutchinson).

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earth, its sunburnt colour and its solitariness, where no person was in sight, the burning sun and wind, and the sight of thousands upon thousands of balls or stars of down, reminded me of old days on horseback on the open pampa—an illimitable waste of rust-red thistles, and the sky above covered with its million floating flecks of white.

“But the South American thistledown, both of the giant thistle and the cardoon, with its longer flower-heads, was much longer and whiter and infinitely more abundant. By day the air was full of it, and I remember that when out with my brother we often enjoyed seeing it at night. After a day or days of wind it would be found in immense masses in the sheltered hollows or among the tall-standing stalks of the dog-plants. These masses gleamed with a strange whitening in the dark, and it used to please us to gallop our horses through them. Horses are nervous, unintelligent creatures, liable to take fright at the most familiar objects, and our animals would sometimes be in terror at finding themselves plunged breast-deep into this insubstantial whiteness, that moved with them and covered them as with a cloud.

“The smaller, more fragile English thistledown, in so few places abundant enough to appear an element in the scene, is beautiful too, and its beauty is, I am inclined to think, all the greater because of its colour. . . . It was as if these slight, silvery objects were springing spontaneously into existence, as the heat opened and the wind lifted and bore them away. All round me, and as far off as such slight, gauzy objects could be seen, they were springing up from the grass in this way in hundreds and thousands. Looking long and steadily at them—their birth and their flight—one could fancy that they were living things of delicate aerial form that had existed for a period hidden and unsuspected in the turf, until their time had come to rise like winged ants from the soil and float in the air.”

We have transcribed perhaps a little more from this book than is exactly in proportion ; but, in the first place, this is the first passage of Mr. Hudson's work that we ever read, and, in the second, it is a pleasure to see flowing from the pen words written so sweetly and so well—and, indeed, we wish we had the time to transcribe, for the sheer delight of it, the whole of this book. And we think that we have not done wrong, for in this passage there is shadowed the whole of the writer—of the writer who, having galloped with young gallantry through the thistledown of early life on the pampas, comes with the fresh eyes of a

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stranger and the keen love of an exile into green and ancient lands, there to spend long hours in the delight of lying still, of gazing at common things, of giving himself up utterly to the spirit of the place. These are, as it were, the biographical details—and there are biographical details enough cropping up, as reminiscences, as comparisons, or as the framework of romances, throughout Mr. Hudson's long tale of works.

Roughly speaking, we may guess from these that Mr. Hudson was born and passed his youth and his early maturity in one or other of the South American republics. He was familiar with the Argentines, with La Plata ("A Naturalist in La Plata"), with Patagonia ("Idle Days in Patagonia"), to come, the first of his family for several generations, to settle again in England. And in England, as it were, he has sat about for years—for, say, a quarter of a century, since the earliest of his English reminiscences that we have appear to date ("Birds in London") from the first years of the 'eighties. Throughout this last quarter of a century he has seemed to saunter from one green contemplation to another, from Sussex through Hampshire* to Cornwall—with long and leisurely strides, keeping time, as it were, with the rhythm of his thoughts and glancing keenly from side to side at the little and real things of life, halting at a hedgerow to peer in, coming again and again to bracken patches in the bare places of which, sinuous, tawny, their backs marked as with a chain of black arrowheads, the adders sunned themselves. It is that note of sauntering and of returning again and again that seems to distinguish all his books. And then he has his matchless style.

There is about his writing something formal and austere, something almost Spanish in its gravity, something almost naïve and childish—with the clearness of fresh phrases that a child has—in the simplicity of his verbiage. And there is nothing whatever that is literary about it: a delightful man speaks without self-consciousness, an effortless poet soliloquises in conversational tones as if he were talking to himself. He is utterly unspoiled by any literary traditions, literary provincialisms, or the literary hunger for the picturesque, for the derivative-word with associations. He has escaped alike the fatal Wardour Street influences of Pre-Raphaelism and the semi-biblical over-emphasis of Stevensonian word-jugglery. Having a clear and precise mind, he has expressed himself with clearness and precision, using simple words that are sometimes quaint, but never affected. It is for this reason that we are

* "Hampshire Days" (Longmans, 1903).

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permitted to consider him the most valuable figure that we have in the world of writers of to-day—the most valuable in that we can learn of him that lesson that most of all we need—the lesson that “style” is a matter of research, not for the striking, the telling, or the obsolescent word, but for the word most fitted to express ourselves to ourselves. No one can learn any tricks from his writing : he has none ; no one can increase his vocabulary from a study of Mr. Hudson, for Mr. Hudson’s vocabulary is quite limited. But with his limited vocabulary and his absence of tricks he has arrived at a vehicle of expression for his thought as simple as that of Christina Rossetti, as limpid as that of M. Anatole France.

With the actual value of his thoughts we are not so much concerned. He is a scientist in his rendering of facts ; he is a poet when it comes to his interpretation of their spiritual aspects. We have a very intimate and somewhat cultured friend who uttered words very much as follows :

“What’s the secret of this man’s fascination ?”—Our friend was speaking, not of the man, but of the writer. “He’s the most wrong-headed fellow it’s possible to imagine. He runs up against me at every turn. I detest nature books, these products of a Cockney age. He writes them. He is for ever sneering at towns : I never set my foot outside London if I can help it. He has all the fads, of simple life, of anti-sporting humanitarianism. He jeers at the affecting epitaph of an ancient huntsman, one of the best and most loyal that ever crossed a saddle. He’s of Colonial origin, and all Colonials are detestable. He upholds every blessed thing that’s most puling in a puling and mawkish century. He gets fits of nerves because he sees an owl in a cage, and that causes him to curse a venerable and splendid city. He believes in exploded theories of race ; he upholds the tomfool idea that the Celtic influence is worth a twopenny-piece. And yet I subscribe to several faddy periodicals that I detest for the mere off-chance of finding in them an article—say about *seagulls* !”—and there was an ocean of disgust in his enunciation of the word *seagulls*—“by this addle-headed poet. It’s as if I rubbed shoulders with temperance orators and Nonconformists in order to get hold of an apostle of garden cities. And why the devil do I do it ?” Mr. —, as will be gathered, is an obstinate Tory ; but we are glad to be able, in this attempt at what may be called an apotheosis, to quote such an *advocatus diaboli*.

The fact is that he searches in these to him squalid byways because he gets so much pleasure out of Mr. Hudson’s manner that he forgets his matter until after the

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book is done. The saying *Φειδίας εἰρηνη* . . . has a double sense, for if Phidias belongs to Peace it is part of the atmosphere of the artist who works in clear and tranquil materials, whether of marble or words, that he confers an atmosphere of restfulness upon his votaries. We are not saying that Mr. Hudson's matter does not matter; but, for the great bulk of his readers, it is all one what he writes about. Who cares for all these things together: La Plata? Hampshire? a Utopia of the Crystal Age? Sussex? Patagonia? cuckoos? barrows? grasshoppers? or the sobriety of Cornish Methodists? We may care, individually, about one or other, or five or six of these matters. Some of us hate downs, a great many people hate the inhabitants of the West Country. To us the thought of South America is as a continent of boredom. Yet we read with quiet avidity "Idle Days in Patagonia," and, concerned as we are with avalanches of new books, dreading new books, we rush helter-skelter to buy the very brand-newest of Mr. Hudson, and read with engrossed insatiety "The Land's End." Well! peace belongs to Phidias.

That, we may take it, is the secret of the matter. It is at once the secret of our enthusiasm, as of our fewness. We do not know that we regard it as a blot on the nation that Mr. Hudson's name is not on all the hoardings. How could it be? With small words this poet gives us peace. You have to blare on some sort of brazen sackbut or psaltery to attract a crowd on fair-day. You will not do it by retiring into the close and meditating on the little lichens of the tombs, by explaining how they dry up and revivify, dry up and show again, minute, speckled, green and orange, as dry season succeeds to rainy and rainy to dry. We know very well that if we ask the next ten men we meet we may find that not one has heard of Mr. Hudson; but we are very certain that if we put one of Mr. Hudson's books into the hands of any one of the ten he will conceive a great affection for this writer. It is customary to speak of Mr. Hudson as "Mr. W. H. Hudson, the naturalist." We should prefer to speak of him as the natural writer. For he is very much more than a naturalist. It is not merely that his range of subject is very wide; that he has written pure romance, pure romantic sociology, or pure poetic imagery, as in the "Little Boy Lost"; nor is it merely that he possesses the power to observe, the patience to collect, or the delicate phraseology with which to record minute, delicate, or pretty happenings in the green chambers of this earth of many mansions. It is that he has the power—the gift—to draw comparisons; to perceive analogies; to build similes; to let his

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thoughts wander along delicate and touching lines. It is, in short, because he is a poet. For it is from the power to compare, to perceive the relationships of things, and to let his thoughts wander that the poet derives his attractions. To be able to perceive a relationship to the Kingdom of Heaven in the tessellated pebbles of a brook ; to be able to convey how the rustle of wind in the dry, false dodder-grass of a down is at one with the thoughts that pass through the mind of a man—this is the inestimable gift, the inestimable gift of perceiving the greater truths that lurk hidden behind all the pleasant little grasses of the downs and the dry thistle-stalks of the pampas. For the poet, by rendering the visible as nearly as may be to perfection, sets stirring in the dulled perceptions of humanity the minute ties that bind us always to the unseen universe. That is why we love Mr. Hudson, who perceives all Heaven in the voices of the birds.

E. R.

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Some Notes on Present-Day German Literature

By Dr. Levin Ludwig Schücking

GERMAN art reaches its highest in music as English art in literature. There is little in German dramatic literature that can be compared with Shakespeare, and few of our novels can stand the comparison with Thackeray's; on the other hand there is nothing in English music that can claim to rank with Bach, Mozart or Beethoven. That, perhaps, is the reason why everything original in art with us seems to tend to music, as in England it does to literature. Witness Hogarth, the Pre-Raphaelites, or the great number of the present Royal Academy painters whose pictures are painted literature. The nearest approach to music is made in literature by lyric poetry. That is why the lyric poetry of Germany ranks so high among all the different species of her literature. Even Goethe's genius soars highest in his lyric pieces, whether embodied in his poems or inserted in his dramas. Drama and novel require, other difficult things apart, character-drawing, structure in the plot, observation of manners. Our literary masters never possessed these faculties to a high degree, and as soon as we had once acquired them to perfection—as for the last time in Konrad Ferdinand Meyer's works—we hastened to get rid of them again. The universal cry of the German reading public is for something different, which is not easily expressed in a single word. If I had to find one, the word "Stimmung" would come nearest to it. I am at a loss in trying to translate that word. It has nothing to do with the sentimentality of which we are so often and so entirely wrongly accused by the observers of German life. To be fond of "Stimmung" is to revel in the sweet child-like representation of the "Madonna with the Beanflower" at Cologne, and to cherish Böcklin's "Play of the Waves" without being disturbed by the thought that the school of Cologne did not know anything of perspective, and that Böcklin's anatomy is indifferent, and his colours anything but true. But to like "Stimmung" is also to prefer Blake to Burns. If I should give a definition of the word, I should say: it is the endeavour to get at the emotional basis of the impression before it has

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passed through the medium of thought, or, that being impossible, to shorten its way as much as can be. But the very essence of art consists in cultivating this way, in embellishing it, in making it a triumphal path! The present standard of German literature is certainly not very high, but—as it shows the effect of the categorical imperative we are wont to hear every century at least once: Be national! Don't imitate! Give your own soul!—it shows perhaps the characteristics I have mentioned more distinctly than the writing of a generation ago, when the influence of French literature was so evident. I do not hesitate to mention among the writers of to-day Ricarda Huch first of all. She is so extremely German. She writes novels as you sing in the twilight, overpowered by memories. What the verses say is not what you are singing, but your heart is in them, it is the feeling in them your soul wants to give voice to—just to soothe itself. Her art, in the proper sense of the word, is not great. Her characters are not particularly interesting, especially from a realistic point of view. Neither does she move her figures on the chess-board of life according to a hidden rule which you feel compelled to recognise as such in the end. She does not care for creating interesting situations. Of problems she knows only one: the suffering of passion which is kept in chains by the conventions of the world. In some cases passion gets rid of them. But more often life is like a quack bleeding the vein of passion and bleeding it again until the sufferer becomes quiet—like a dead man. And sometimes she shows how passion can act like a spoiled child, suddenly changing the object longed for for half a life-time. Reason had nothing to do with the beginning, why should it with the end? As regards the details of modern life, Ricarda Huch's books might have been written centuries ago. Nobody ever opens an umbrella or draws out his purse in any of her novels. She would describe a bank-clerk with words used by Flaubert to picture Hamilcar Barca. That is because she has preserved that wonderful kind of imagination peculiar to children, which nearly all of us have lost. Notice a little child looking at a goose or a donkey! His interest is much more intense than would be mine if Monsieur Rodin or, say Mr. Bernard Shaw were talking to me. The reason lies in there being so much that is mysterious and, in some respects, important and full of meaning in the animal. It is one of the great disillusionments nobody can be spared, that there is so little meaning in the world and so few things that *are* mysterious and important. But Ricarda Huch has kept this childlike interest in things living and lifeless, which, by the way, existed also “in

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the beginning of years," in the childhood of man, where you find it with old Homer, who is not able to speak of a thing even so unimportant as a threshold without adding the epithet, "the well-smoothed one." In her book "Aus der Triumphgasse, Lebensskizzen," you notice this faculty to a degree which is astounding. The tale deals with the lowest stratum of society and the poorest people on earth, people with little morals and to say the least, rather unconventional behaviour. But her pen gilds the whole of it as the sun's rays gild a heap of dirt. Their ways of thinking assume an aspect of philosophical depth—"God is not fond of poor people, don't you see?"—their dwelling-place, the oldest part of an old Italian town with relics of antiquity enclosed within modern buildings—a Corinthian pillar, for instance, immured in a modern wall, looking "like a prisoner" among the bricks around—gains a strange and mysterious charm, and even their traditions of life, pitiful and miserable as they are, lead to gratifications quite unknown to everybody else, as with the invalid bedridden boy, who lives cheerfully on a few interesting or beautiful impressions he has been able to gather. In his presence the narrator seems to feel as if the boy were retaining something like a film of his visitor's being to keep, with which in future to fill a blank in his dreams. Ricarda Huch is more than a novelist—she is a poetess.

There could not possibly be two literary personalities more unlike than she and the author of "Buddenbrooks." Ricarda Huch is of the old romantic Germany of a hundred years ago. The soul of Brentano chose her body in which to come to life again and tried to adapt himself to modern ideas as far as he could. Thomas Mann belongs to a nation which prides itself on understanding what the "reality of life" means, a nation which smiles at the idea of its forefathers having the weakness to feel flattered at being called by a famous English novelist the "nation of poets and thinkers." Many are the characteristics which show this author to belong to a time which posterity perhaps will call the "Bismarckian period" of Germany. The very leading feature of "Buddenbrooks," the endeavour to show the gradual decadence of a great Lübeck trading firm in three generations is an *aristocratic* idea, for it presupposes the reader's sympathy with the "old family." But present Germany, or at least present Prussia, is aristocratic. The little word "von" before your name has not had as much importance as it has now, for the last hundred years. Large parts of the inner service are being reserved for the aristocracy, the conservative party

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having got hold of it and considering it indisputably its domain. Democracy is struggling hard. The country *is* interested in everything aristocratic and it *has* sympathies with an old family like the Buddenbrooks, slowly losing to the rising plebeians their powerful influence in the old free-town republic. Neither is it to be disputed that the "jujet" has some artistic attraction in itself. It is a pity only, that Thomas Mann should be so wordy and diffuse. He certainly uses a tub full of paint to colour a pencil. That requires a certain amount of patience on the part of the reader, but he will be rewarded by getting to know from the book the most minute details of present-day German life. There never was a shrewder observer than Thomas Mann. To be sure there is in his work much of that "unimaginative realism" that Mr. Swinburne detests so heartily. You notice the influence of Zola with him. But it always will have a certain charm to see everyday life reflected in the mirror of a really clever and sometimes satirical writer's spirit. Such books grow upon the time. If their artistic qualities are strong enough to stand the test of years they become more interesting still to later generations as being living monuments of bygone periods. When Fielding wrote his "Amelia" the realism of the book appeared awkward to the great majority of English readers, who were accustomed to devouring Richardson's descriptions of an imaginary world, created in Salisbury Court, Fleet Street. But a book like "Amelia" was written for the reader of a hundred years later, who would read it also with the historian's eye. I do not think, however, that Thomas Mann's books will enjoy a life as long as that. Yet his descriptions are undoubtedly valuable. He pictures you the quaint manners of old Lübeck, he shows you how the men are simply products of the distinct "milieu" of a place, where there is a form ready and prepared for each utterance of life which may come to the surface with respectable people; he demonstrates to you the difference between the light-hearted, jovial, unconventional South German and the solemn, reserved, aristocratic North German, to whom life ever remains a very serious thing and who feels himself always responsible for something; and if for no other reason, Mann's work deserves special notice for his observations of the half-unconscious. Passages like the following bear testimony to the psychological side of his art: "He spoke with naïve and kind-hearted indignation, he tried some gesticulations, but noticing them to be ungainly he left off again." Or, talking of the "Bohémien" son coming home after many years' absence: "He went up the prodigious staircase, he leaned his hand upon

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the white-varnished open stair rail, lifting it up at every step and letting it fall again upon it quite smoothly at the next, as though he were trying if it were possible to take up the former intimacy with the old solid banister again." Subtle impressions of this sort are cultivated in German literature nowadays. Refinement of artistic feeling is the great aim of the day. Thackeray called his "Vanity Fair": "a novel without a hero." It would serve the same purpose to announce "a novel with a hero" in our days. Really sympathetic people whose destiny you care for with all your heart, you will only find in third-rate literature. Present dramatic literature is very much of the same sort. Nobody cries in the theatre nowadays except the manager (because of its emptiness). You must go back as far as the "Roman de la Rose" in the middle ages to find so much æstheticism in literature as there was in German literature, at least until a short time ago. How could it be different, if the authors themselves openly professed their human deficiencies in passages like the following (From "Tonio Kröger," a short story by Thomas Mann): "He does not know anything of art who thinks the creative artist was allowed to feel. Every genuine and honest artist smiles at the 'naïveté' of this error—melancholy perhaps—but he smiles. For *what* you say is never the principal thing, it only gives the material which serves you to create æsthetic compositions in sportive and unconcerned superiority. If you care too much for what you have to say, if your heart is too much interested in it, you may be sure of a perfect failure. Feeling, real, hearty feeling, is always banal and no good, only the irritations and cold ecstasies of your corrupted nervous system are of artistic value. You must be something inhuman or extra-human, your relations to everything human must be strangely loose and unconcerned to feel at all impelled to act it, to play with it, to perform it effectively and tastefully. . . . Healthy and respectable people don't write, don't play, don't compose."

Although there is a little bit of truth at the bottom of this statement, surely Shakespeare or Keats would not have denounced their profession like that unless in joke. But the quoted lines are not by any means written in a jesting mood. Is it to be wondered at, if literature which originated in the way the author himself describes does merely evoke a certain artistic interest? Goethe's famous verse elucidates the matter better than any words could:

"Doch werdet Ihr nie Herz zu Herzen schaffen,
Wenn er Euch nicht von Herzen geht!"

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Sometimes the truth seems to steal upon the representatives of this kind of æstheticism. One of their principal leaders, Hugo von Hoffmannsthal of Vienna, has written a poem, which might be called "The Æsthete's Complaint." Its real title is: "Der Thor und der Tod" (Death and the unwise man). Its form is dramatic. But there is no dramatic action, in the proper sense of the word, in it. It resembles more in its outward shape that beautiful piece of mediæval poetry called "Everyman" which, being unearthed by the Elizabethan Stage Society some years ago, made such an astoundingly deep impression upon every hearer. This is what happens in the poem: Claudio, the nobleman, receives a sinister visit: Death calls on him. Anguish and despair fill his soul. "Do not come near me," he cries to Death. "I have not lived yet! My life has been a plaything to me until now, I have not known its depths, I never met the god on my way with whom you wrestle until he blesses you." But Death remains inexorable. One benefit only he will confer on the doomed man: he conjures up all the shadows of his past life to make him see that his life was overfull, to open his eyes to what he has lost by his own fault. And so they all come: his mother, whose tenderness he knew no answer to, his mistress, whose love to him was like a flower he donned and doffed, his friend, who never could be more to him than his companion in idle hours. They all speak to him. Too late he recognises what has passed him by. The one moment in which he feels it, is destined to be his last. Hugo von Hoffmannsthal has written a great number of plays, he has dusted Otway's periwig in trying to modernise "Venice Preserved" and he has provided Sophocles' "Electra" with *fin de siècle* clothing, but in none of these works has he produced anything like the beautiful lines in which the æsthete confesses his incapability of getting hold of life, whose master you cannot become unless you have first been his slave. Hoffmannsthal's verses keep reminding you of "Faust" and he is undoubtedly a posthumous literary child of Goethe. It is a remarkable fact that Goethe's influence in Germany is much stronger at present than it has been for many decades. This influence is only felt, however, by a certain type of authors. Hermann Sudermann certainly does not belong to them. Is he a German writer at all? I think he would have lived happier and done better if he had been born among people possessing an inborn understanding of the "technics," as it were, of dramatic art. The qualities of his art are not appreciated in his native country as they would be in France; our inclinations, as I have tried to

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show, tending to a different direction. And, besides, you never forgive a man for having thought too highly of him at your first acquaintance. The theatres of Berlin have seldom ever witnessed triumphs like those which Sudermann's first plays gained. But dramatic art and dramatic taste altered, and Sudermann remained what he was. So people came to look at him in a different light. Critics began to treat him depreciatorily and he tried to avenge himself by writing the renowned series of articles "On the growing barbarisation of dramatic criticism in Berlin." The result was more fatal to him than he could possibly have expected. Mythology teaches us about Orpheus alluring the wild beasts of prey by his delicious flute-playing. I wonder why they did not tear him to pieces and devour him as soon as he left off! But at any rate I expect he was careful enough not to give them a curtain lecture. . . . Sudermann's literary fate is sad. If you want to show good literary taste in Germany at the present time, and if you do not mind appearing a snob in your own eyes, always answer, when asked what you think of him, the single word "*faiseur*," and everybody will applaud you, except perhaps a few people who will remark hesitatingly that the case is not to be made out so easily. It is true, Sudermann's latest works do not in any way strengthen his advocate's position. When it was announced that he was returning to his first love, the novel, the universal satisfaction of his friends and old admirers was great. But "Das hohe Lied" (the Canticles), published some months ago, turned out a most cruel disappointment to nearly all of them. There is no need for books dealing with the "Nachtleben" of Berlin, no need for the "Dame aux Camélias" problem to be treated again and again, be it ever so cleverly done. We expected something better from him, a book in which there was the breath of the heath he once could describe so excellently instead of the bad perfume of the *chambre séparée*, a book which lighted up the dark paths which lead to a new future. Fortunately, a new generation of writers seems to be growing up, to whom our expectations may turn hopefully. But upon these I shall have to report some other time.

The Literary and Economic Future of Liberal Mormonism

By Edgar Jepson

THE combination of things so diverse as the literary future and the economic future of a great movement should not to the modern man appear strange. Such a diversity, indeed, can but be a mere seeming; for on the one hand all our great modern teachers, from Mr. G. Bernard Shaw right away through ex-President Roosevelt to the German Emperor, have demonstrated so exactly that everything is a matter of economics, that such a combination has become imperative; and on the other hand, and in particular, our own Incorporated Society of Authors has by so many years of patient and successful endeavour established the prime fact that Literature is precisely the same thing as Economics that it would be alike old-fashioned and indecorous to dream that it could be anything else. In truth the philosopher of to-day, in the pangs of a suppressed bent, would no longer cry, "Let who will make a people's laws, but let *me* make its songs." He would assuredly cry, "Let who will make a people's laws, but let *me* make out its bills." If the everlasting caviller should still be inclined to deny their actual identity, at least he cannot deny that the intimate connection of Literature and Economics, in the modern world, with the white-hot question of Sex, has united them by the infrangible bond of an indissoluble kinship.

I do not propose to dwell on the deplorable schism which has severed the Liberal Mormon Church from the Ultramontane Mormon Church at Utah. The refusal of the Liberal Mormons to accept more than the figurative significance of the silver spectacles of Joseph Smith, the revered founder of the Church, is a matter of general knowledge. But none of our modern historians of the Churches, including even Professor Franz Holtze and Sir Henry Kelk-Jenks, has fully realised how near the Liberal Mormons came to forcing what was accounted their heresy on the Mother Church. It was assuredly the bitterest theological struggle of recent years. There were able men, brainy hustlers of the first class, on either side; and the struggle might have been prolonged for a decade, had not the leaders of the

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Mother Church hit upon the admirable device of subsidising the Democratic party in Utah and employing the police as a final theological argument. In the palmy days of Ultramontane Mormonism, indeed, the Saints would simply have set the Danites on the heretics, and massacred them out of hand. But modern times, modern manners; and it presently became impossible for a Liberal Mormon to take the air on the boulevards of Utah without being enthusiastically clubbed by some Irish-American policeman, utterly ignorant of the nice point of doctrine at issue, but in the pay of the Mother Church.

Bradley K. Odgett, the able leader of the Liberal Mormons, perceived at once that only two courses were open to them; either they could retort, in the national fashion, with repeating-rifles, or they could go. Since, as I have said, they numbered among their members some of the brainiest hustlers in the Great Pure Republic, they chose the less commonplace course, and went. There is some evidence that their choice was determined by their desire for the wider sphere of the more up-to-date world beyond the hills of Utah; but be that as it may, in two and a half days the most literary, the most artistic, the most businesslike, the brainiest and most complexly modern Mormons left their native city by train.

The inconsiderate have made haste to reproach the leading and most-married members of the Liberal Mormon Church with the fact that they left behind them their earlier wives. It is a most unjust reproach. In the first place they departed in haste. Indeed, they only delayed long enough to make a purely formal transfer of their property to Ultramontane Mormon Church relatives, on whose integrity they hoped they could rely to forward to them, in their places of exile, the income accruing from it. Departing thus in haste, with as few impedimenta as possible, it is only natural that they should have left behind possessions of less recent interest. Again, they did not wish to sever every tie with their native city. It was merely politic to keep alive in the minds of their persecutors the fact that though they were themselves absent in the body, they were present in the spirit of several thousand middle-aged but active women, whom they could trust to make smoother the path for their return—in the improbable event of their ever wishing to return—by their persistent clamour for their departed husbands.

In spite, however, of the haste of its exodus, the Liberal Mormon Church did not find itself disorganised. It established itself at once, as a coherent body, at the town of Keokuk, Iowa, and presently formed a powerful branch at Chicago, Illinois. It

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chose these two cities for its chief habitations as being typically modern in the most up-to-date sense of the word. From these seats it devoted itself strenuously to two objects: the first, making it hot for the Mother Church; the second, the propagation of the Liberal Mormon scheme of life.

With the degree of warmth it imparted to the Mother Church I am not concerned. I am only concerned with its scheme of life as a literary, artistic, and economic factor in the future of the world. The chief point is that as it departed from Utah with the most attractive material impedimenta—I refer of course to the more recent wives of its members—so it departed with the most attractive spiritual impedimenta. It left behind it the sacred spectacles of the revered Smith; but it brought away with it the great doctrine of Ten Per Cent., and the even greater doctrine of the Expansion of the Home.

For this matter of Ten Per Cent. as a theological doctrine I cannot find words rich enough to express my admiration. It has been the mainstay of Mormonism; it has made Mormonism what it is. The doctrine is on the face of it derived from the Jewish ordinances with regard to tithes. But whereas in that primitive and hardly efficient religion the exact payment was left to the consciences of the faithful, somewhat frail reeds on which to lean, Mormonism has invented and brought to perfection an excellently working and up-to-date system by which every penny of ten per cent. of his income is exacted from every member of the Church. There are no rebates.

This admirable theological doctrine built Utah. It transformed great stretches of the barrenest waste in the world, the alkali desert of Utah, into one of the most fruitful of lands. Where the most vigorous efforts of the church-member would have been futile, the Church stepped in with its splendid Ten Per Cent., and carried out gigantic schemes of irrigation. It is to this great doctrine that the Liberal Mormons of Keokuk and West Kensington, of Melbourne and Montmartre, look for the creation of those garden cities in which they crave to dwell. It is to this great doctrine that they look to convert the spiritually heterogeneous nations into happy Mormon wholes.

This doctrine is the economic basis of the Liberal Mormon community. With regard to the individual Mormon in Literature, Art, or Business, the teaching of the Liberal Mormon Church is typically up to date. It is not only idealistic but practical, being founded partly on the attitude of the Israelites to the Egyptians immediately before the Exodus, and partly on a careful study of the latest American methods. Acquisition,

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Hustle, and Advertisement are its watchwords. It says, "Get what you can—and the rest"; and again, "Whatever you do, do it in a hurry, if it is only chewing gum"; and again, "It is better to advertise the fact that you have a cork leg than not to advertise at all." By acting in his characteristic, spirited way, on these basic principles, the Liberal Mormon is hardly ever known to fail to become a force in the literary, artistic, or business world of any city he adorns.

But it is by its application of economics to the home that Liberal Mormonism has secured to itself so splendid a future, so ever-widening an influence in both hemispheres. It has realised, along with Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, ex-President Roosevelt, and the German Emperor, that the eternal sex problem is purely economic, and that for the individual to attain to a full expression of himself in this meritorious sphere an understanding of a few economic principles is a prime necessity. It is along these lines that it conducts that successful proselytising which is adding so quickly to its numbers. In hundreds of sermons and addresses, in thousands of heart-to-heart talks that admirable apostolic enthusiast, Bradley K. Odgett, has spread the glad knowledge of his economic theology throughout the East and Middle-West of the Great Pure Republic. But more powerful than his oral efforts, and those of his helpers, has been his monumental and epoch-making work, "The Expansion of the Home."

I cannot but ascribe the inspiration of this noble book to the spirit of exhilaration and freedom which followed the exodus from the narrow confines of Utah; indeed I myself feel it to be the chiefest first-fruit of the Mormon Renaissance. The inspiration of freedom can alone have stimulated Bradley K. Odgett to the splendid task of bringing the merely sentimental patriarchate, ordained by the Book of Mormon, into a truly efficient accord with our complex modernity. In this illuminating treatise the new theory of domestic happiness is developed with that admirable, practical, and most minute attention to detail which is only found in the really great classics of the literatures of the world. The chapter on "Porridge as the Staple Food of Women and Children," with its tables of the comparative values of the different kinds of oatmeals and patent oats, is a revelation in domestic dietetics. The chapter "Peace in the Home," in which Bradley K. Odgett discusses with lofty and illuminating earnestness the peacefulness induced by providing wives with one another to quarrel with, seems to me the masterpiece of proselytising literature; it offers the one hope of averting the danger of race suicide with which the Great Pure Republic

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is threatened. The immense increase, too, in the happy young Mormon husband's working capacity which results from this peacefulness is demonstrated beyond cavil. The increase works out at 77.58 per cent.

Of no less interest to us, tired as we are of the narrow grooves in which modern English life runs, are the elaborate but very clear tables, compiled for the benefit of young Mormons embarking on their second or third matrimonial venture, of the cost in all cities at present blessed with Liberal Mormon communities, of keeping from two to seven wives and from four to thirty-five children. They well repay a careful study.

I am loth to weary my readers with statistics ; but I cannot refrain from quoting some figures from two of these illuminating tables.

A young Mormon may safely start a second wife :

In Chicago on \$1984.80 per annum.

In Schenectady on \$1750 per annum.

In Keokuk on \$1585.20 per annum.

In West Kensington on £256 10s. per annum.

In Montmartre on Fr. 3847 per annum.

In Coblenz on Marks 4600 per annum.

In Florence on Lire 3763 per annum.

In Odessa on Roubles 3111 per annum.

In Herzegovina (the cheapest place on which a Liberal Mormon community has so far lighted) on Piastres 1671 per annum.

No deduction of the ten per cent. due to the Church has been made from these incomes ; they have been reckoned inclusive of that due.

It will be observed from the smallness of the incomes that this table has been compiled for young Mormons beginning not only their matrimonial but also their literary, business, or artistic career. The next table in "The Expansion of the Home" has been compiled for more prosperous young married Mormons ; and from it it appears that they can expand their home by the admission of a third wife, on an income of :

£342 in West Kensington.

£703 in Bayswater

£1413 in Mayfair.

£572 in Bloomsbury.

£298 in the more Pimlico portions of Belgravia.

These figures are indeed satisfactory ; but yet it was plain that, small as are the incomes in the first table, it was not easy for an enthusiastic young Mormon to embark on a thoroughly equipped matrimonial career at as early an age as he must feel that the good of the community demands. For a long while even

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the literary and administrative genius of Bradley K. Odgett was at a loss ; and with the other leaders of the Liberal Mormon Church he debated in vain scheme after scheme for surmounting this unfortunate monetary obstacle. They were almost in despair of finding the solution of the problem, when that gifted woman Henrietta Schwafer Binns, of Chicago, came to their aid with her excellent monograph on "The Supporting Spouse"

This gifted woman, famous for her efforts, on many platforms, to alleviate the lot of the superfluous woman, found, like so many other ardent social reformers of to-day, the economic and domestic ideal she was seeking, in the Liberal Mormon community, and joined the Chicago branch. I have reason to believe that she had at one time the desire to join also the household of Bradley K. Odgett ; but that could not be. Her fine intelligence, however, remained unimpaired by what must have been a serious disappointment ; and she addressed herself vigorously to the solution of the early marriage problem.

It is quite plain to me that for the inspiration of her monograph on "The Supporting Spouse" Henrietta Schwafer Binns went to the bee. She saw how that ingenious insect has solved the problem of the superfluous female by freely permitting her to work ; and she applied this admirable device to the human Mormon home. She demonstrated that by taking two supporting spouses, not only self-supporting, that is, but supporting also the home, along with every ordinary wife, the young Mormon can start on a full matrimonial career at the proper early age. Liberal Mormonism adopted the simple, effective scheme with acclamation.

Care should be taken to select the supporting spouses as far as possible from that large and increasing body of modern women who are vastly superior to motherhood. From this system they get all the delights of domesticity and comforts of home with none of its drawbacks. The system is working admirably in the Great Pure Republic. In West Kensington, where, owing to the excess of women over men, it is greatly needed, I am sorry to say that by reason of the painful slowness of the English to adopt new ideas, it has not yet come into general practice. But I know of one happy Mormon home in that elegant suburb, consisting of a husband, two ordinary wives, and four supporting spouses, in which the system is working in a most gratifying fashion. The ordinary wives look after the house, the servants, and the children. The husband is a rising young stockbroker of keen literary ambitions and with a passionate admiration of the works of Miss Marie Corelli. The supporting spouses act as his clerks and touts ; and they are so

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rarely on speaking terms with one another that I fully believe that more work is done in that office than in any other office in the city of London. I do not know a happier home, or one in which the husband enjoys more literary stimulation, or more wifely sympathy. There is perhaps a lack of sympathy between wife and wife; and it seems something of an extravagance to have six separate subscriptions to Mudie's. But one cannot have everything; and it is contrary to nature that women should live in perpetual harmony with one another.

So satisfactory, both from the economic and domestic points of view, has this system proved in the Great Pure Republic that the leaders of Liberal Mormonism are devoting most of their time and labour to its elaboration and extension. Already they see their way to gathering the vast body of superfluous and superior women into the Mormon home circle, and brightening their arid lives by according to them the comforts, the porridge, and the privileges of the wife in return for their labour. It is moreover clear that by the judicious collection of supporting spouses there need be practically no limit to the domesticity of the persevering young Mormon. By the time he is forty he may easily have collected from a hundred to a hundred and fifty wives, ordinary and supporting, and may be the father of as many children, with house-property for their accommodation. In fact by the time he has reached middle age, he may have as large a stake in the community as Solomon himself.

It is impossible to over-estimate the literary stimulation of this fulness of the home life. There will be a Song of Jonathan, a Song of John, a Song of Alphonse, and a Song of Fritz, all of them on the lines of the Song of Solomon, but of a greater beauty owing to the finer technique which comes from modern improvements in metre and rhyme.

These then are the more obvious literary and economic blessings which spring from Liberal Mormonism. But if one looks deeper into this admirable scheme of life, it grows plain that it will bring about a glorious transfiguration of the world. The old order, of which we are all so heartily tired, must pass away. No longer man, but woman will go forth to her labour—or, to be exact, several women will go forth to their labour. Man in the end will stay at home, and no longer wasting himself on taking thought for the morrow, will cultivate with unswerving firmness his literary or artistic faculties, a delicate appreciation of the finer foods and older wines, the graces and activities of the body, in that manly tranquillity of spirit through which alone will be attained the perfection of the human race.

Capital Punishment in France*

By D. Simons

Professor of Criminal Law at the University of Utrecht

Two years ago I wrote an article on the subject of the death-penalty in Holland, in which country this penalty was last inflicted in 1860 and abolished finally in 1870. I came to the conclusion that there can be no question of reviving capital punishment in our country and that it is exceedingly improbable that its reintroduction will ever be debated by parliament. A last attempt was made to give capital punishment a place in our legislation in the year 1880, when our penal code was passed and settled in its present form. This attempt failed, and has not been renewed since. And under subsequent ministries, notwithstanding their distinctly clerical character, the revival of capital punishment has never been seriously suggested.

I have now been honoured by the Editor of THE ENGLISH REVIEW with a request for my opinion about the discussion on the death-penalty in France; in other words, for a treatment of the question of capital punishment with special reference to conditions in France. Nothing would be easier than to offer, in reply, the above-mentioned essay, revised and brought up to date in view of those special conditions. The answer that served for Holland would but have needed to be adapted for France and I should have acquitted myself of my task in the simplest possible fashion. It would, however, have been utterly at variance with my own ideas on the question of capital punishment.

There are three leading opinions to be distinguished in connection with this eagerly debated problem. According to the first opinion, the judgment announced in Genesis, that "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," is still in force; and it is incumbent upon the secular legislator and judge to act in accordance with this celestial decree and to punish every case of intentional homicide with death. Diametrically opposed to this opinion (which in our country still finds favour among men who apply the doctrines of strict and orthodox

* Translated by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos.

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Calvinism to politics) is the theory of those who, for the very reason that man is made in God's image, deny the right of society to dispose of the life and death of even the worst criminal and who refuse this right to the magistracy on the grounds of natural law. According to both these views, the numbers of whose adherents have been constantly and gradually diminishing, the question of capital punishment is the same at all times and places and should meet with the same answer in every country. Either it must be practised, because there is no other way of obeying the divine injunction ; or it may on no account be practised, even though social order should be endangered in consequence : the law must never be maintained at the cost of an unlawful act.

I accept neither of these two views. I acknowledge the right of the authorities to ensure the maintenance of law and order, if need be, by sacrificing the life of the criminal ; ay, and I admit that, should a legislator be persuaded that he cannot in any other way fulfil his allotted task in the service of the law and, nevertheless, fail to employ extreme measures, he neglects his duty. I am unable to see why the legislator should call a halt before the life of the criminal, why an inalienable right should just attach to the preservation of that life, so that it may not be assailed even for the necessary maintenance of the law. To secure the observance of law and order is the first duty of every government, the foremost mission of the State ; and for this very reason all measures are lawful which are indispensable and inevitable for the fulfilment of that duty. If, however, I reject the opinion of those who unconditionally deny the legality of capital punishment, I agree still less with the others who persist in appealing to a divine precept laid down for every age and century and who, on that ground, demand the death of the criminal as a reprisal for each individual act of intentional homicide. I acknowledge the right of the magistracy to threaten and apply the death-penalty, but I deny any such obligation on their part.

To my mind the problem simply stands thus : where capital punishment is a necessary and indispensable penalty, it may be practised. I would hasten to mention that M. Briand, the French Minister of Justice, defending the bill for the abolition of capital punishment in the name of his government, very forcibly adopted the same point of view :

"J'admets," he declared, "pour donner satisfaction aux adversaires, que la peine de mort soit légitime."

The principal seconder of the Government proposal, the

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present minister, M. Cruppi, expressed himself in exactly the same sense in his excellent speech in favour of the abolition :

“J’admets que la peine de mort peut se justifier moralement et socialement, si elle est indispensable à la sécurité commune.”

No doubt, if we accept this view, the discussion on capital punishment loses much of its former significance ; it can no longer soar to those exalted spheres in which the loftiest questions of legal philosophy are situate ; it keeps within the domain of sober facts ; it concerns itself with the question : “Is capital punishment necessary as an extreme measure, or can it be dispensed with ?”

Now among those who defend capital punishment, not as an absolute measure of requital, but as an indispensable weapon in the service of law and order, which would be inadequately protected without it, there can hardly be a difference of opinion : they must all agree that, if the killing of the criminal cannot be proved indispensable, it should forthwith disappear from the list of penalties. Against capital punishment *qua* punishment there are grave and important objections. It is possible, as the advocates of capital punishment endeavour to do, to try and mitigate these objections ; but to deny their existence, to leave them out of account, is not possible. The French Government, in support of its bill for the abolition, brought forward some seven objections, which, all together, amount to this, that capital punishment lacks those qualities which a good means of punishment ought to possess. The objections have not all the same value. For instance, doubts are at once suggested as to the first consideration advanced, namely, that capital punishment has no effect. In further support of this argument, it is next alleged that, according to the statistics of countries in which the death-penalty has been abolished and replaced by another punishment, there has been no increase of crime. Now for the moment I will leave the value of this appeal to statistical data entirely on one side, and content myself with saying that, even if another penalty were to have a similar effect to that of the death-penalty, it would not show that the latter is deficient in effect. This last theory could only be looked upon as proved if the abolition of the death-penalty resulted in an important decrease in the number of crimes which up to then had been punished with that penalty. A similar observation could be made in reply to the second objection, which is that capital punishment is lacking in deterrent character. The Government here ventures upon a very dangerous assertion, if it means to

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imply that the overhanging threat of capital punishment has never deterred an individual from his resolve to commit a crime. This "never" conveys more than any one can possibly justify. But it cannot really be the question whether the threat of capital punishment has ever stayed the hand of a man determined upon a crime ; the question can only be whether that threat is able to exercise a greater deterrent influence than any other punishment. Now it is upon this notion that the advocates of capital punishment love to rely, whereas the opponents cannot and may not go further than to contest the justice of the contention. This is what the Government does in formulating its third objection, which, properly speaking, cannot be looked upon as a substantial objection. It is to the effect that capital punishment is not necessary, because there is a sufficient number of other punishments at present available to serve as a check upon crime. Even supposing that this were correct, which the advocates of capital punishment, of course, deny, we are still not told why capital punishment should be rated less than any other form of punishment. Supposing the result achieved by capital punishment to be also obtainable by imprisonment for life, this surely is far from proving that the latter punishment ought and that the former ought not to be included in the penal system. As between the "*faire mourir sans faire souffrir*" and the "*faire souffrir sans faire mourir*" of Tarde's antithesis, one might even give the preference to the first alternative, on the ground of humanity. At the same time we are bound to say that this postulate as to the absence of suffering is not to be granted unconditionally. True, the execution itself is over in a few moments ; but who can realise the terrible suspense of the condemned man who, as he lies down to sleep each night, must prepare himself for the possibility that he will be awakened in the morning to take his last walk, the walk to the scaffold ? Who can measure the anguish of mind that fills the poor wretch from the moment when he acquires the certainty that his last hour has struck until that at which the executioner has performed his gruesome and bloody work ? Face to face with the great unknown to which his fellow men have banished him, what are his thoughts, how terrible is his fear, how deep his mental suffering ? Who shall venture to answer these questions ?

Another objection brought forward by the French Government is that the capital sentence—that is to say, the actual execution of it—does not have an elevating, a morally bracing influence upon the mass. This objection, with its negative form, is stated with insufficient force ; we should be quite safe

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in wording it thus: that the execution of the death-sentence has on numerous occasions led to gross and repulsive scenes from which a right-minded man turns with aversion, scenes of which he cannot bear to think without shame. The public infliction of the death-penalty has furnished melancholy criterion of the condition of civilisation and the state of mind of the great mass of humanity and has generally failed to give the impression (which at least it ought) of a solemnity—horrible, certainly, yet compelling respect, because performed in the name of law and justice. The result is that, wherever the retention of capital punishment is defended, a persistent demand at the same time is heard for execution within the prison walls. Now, in this connection, the opponents of capital punishment urge, not unfairly, that the law which puts the criminal to death with closed doors proves itself ashamed of its own deeds. This much is certain, that private executions must needs deprive the death-penalty of a part of the deterrent force ascribed to it: those who wish to deter by means of the execution must not shrink from publicity. But, even if you do not accept this argument, even if you think it your duty to suppress public executions in the interests of public morality and public order, do not hug the idea that by so doing you have made offensive scenes impossible for good and all. That idea would be rudely dispelled. You have only to think of what happened quite recently in Germany, at the execution of Grete Beyer; how people fought for cards of admission to the “performance;” how so-called persons of refinement were anxious to assist at the nerve-shattering spectacle. Our neurotic race loves to have its nerves shocked. If you would really avoid everything that could make the execution of the death-penalty lose the character of a simple deprivation of life, you should administer to the convict, unknown to himself, a painless poison, which will put him quietly to sleep, never to wake again. In this way alone will you kill without causing suffering; but then, at the same time, you will make it most clearly evident that, in the matter of capital punishment, you are concerned first and foremost with rendering the criminal incapable of doing harm and really with nothing else whatever. And then, as was pointed out years ago by a German criminal lawyer, you cease to punish: you simply destroy.

A further argument adduced by the French Government in support of its bill is that capital punishment clashes with the notion of improvement and amendment that ought to underlie all punishment. The accuracy of this contention cannot be denied, unless we are prepared to regard in the light of amend-

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ment the display of repentance under the immediate influence of the pending execution. On the other hand, the question is open to discussion as to how far amendment is really to be regarded as the object of punishment. When our criminal code, as at present constituted, was under discussion the Dutch Minister of Justice said :

“The improvement of the criminal is not the *object* of punishment ; but the punishment awarded in the interests of society is made, in those same interests, to conduce towards improvement.”

It would be even more accurate to say that the improvement of the criminal cannot be *the* object of punishment, the sole and exclusive object, but that, nevertheless, in the case of a large number of convicts, it may really be regarded as an object, an important object, of punishment. In the case of those who seem to require and who are capable of amendment, the punishment should be made to serve that aim. But is this the case with many of those to whom people would wish to see capital punishment applied ? Probably not ; certainly, with most of them, the question of depriving them of the power of doing further mischief will be considered first of all ; the most heinous criminals can, no doubt, be reckoned among the so-called incorrigibles. But the necessary addition of the phrase “so-called ” at once shows us that we must not attach an absolute significance to this incorrigibility. Even a character that is already fully formed remains liable to change ; the apparently most hardened villain can become capable of receiving fresh impressions and, under their influence, can develop into another and a better man. The chance is not a great one, but it must not be excluded. It has often been objected to the new tendency in criminal law, with its demand for the rigorous treatment of habitual offenders looked upon as incorrigible, that such incorrigibility must not be presumed, for the reason that it can never be established. It is inconsistent to continue, in spite of that, to defend a penalty which destroys a criminal’s life itself and thereby in the most absolute fashion excludes any chance that the execution of the punishment may quench his inclination to crime and have a refining influence on his character.

Another serious objection is that capital punishment allows of no graduation and leads to great arbitrariness in its application. The first half of this objection did not, of course, apply in the days of intensified death-penalties, when the judge taxed his ingenuity to discover fitting reprisals for the abhorrent crime in ever-increasing refinements of cruelty. But those days, for-

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tunately, are past, and there is no one who seriously wishes them back. Capital punishment to-day can be no more than a simple forfeiture of life. But then arises the great and striking disproportion that offences which, it is true, bear the same judicial name, but which, both subjectively and objectively, are as distant one from the other as heaven from earth, nevertheless have as their result one and the same penalty. The unfairness of this equality of punishment may be strikingly illustrated by the fact that, in our country, in the years 1897 to 1902, there were twenty-nine convictions for murder—that is to say, homicide with malice aforethought—and yet in only two cases was there sentence of imprisonment for life, whereas thirteen received sentences varying from only one to five years and one was even sentenced to not more than six months' imprisonment. And yet the last was also guilty of murder ; and he, like the first two, would have had to undergo capital punishment had that penalty been in force. This, of course, applies only to countries, such as England and Germany, where capital punishment is threatened absolutely and where every conviction for murder or *Mord** must necessarily be followed by sentence of death. In France the case has been different since 1832 ; and the jury, by bringing in so-called *circonstances atténuantes*, is able to prevent the death-sentence. We have here the question whether that sentence shall be pronounced dependent upon the very subjective views of the French juries ; and any one acquainted with the verdicts of juries in France knows that those verdicts turn upon all sorts of considerations, which have very little to do with the gravity of the offence committed or the personality of the criminal. We know that, since the proposal for the abolition of capital punishment was first mooted, numbers of juries deemed it necessary to petition the President of the Republic for its retention. In this connection it has been rightly observed that the jury itself, through its repeated award of extenuating circumstances, is first of all responsible for the fact that the application of the death-penalty has become so remarkably less frequent. For the rest, it is worthy of note that of late years, as a reaction against the movement in favour of the abolition, juries have refused to allow extenuating circumstances in cases where otherwise these would have undoubtedly been awarded.

But, in countries where capital punishment still prevails absolutely, we must not take it that sentence is always, nor even as a rule, followed by execution. The prerogative of mercy

* The sense of the English murder is much wider than that of the German *Mord*, which corresponds pretty nearly with the French *assassinat*.

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still works as a means of reducing the real application to a minimum in all of them, including England, the country among civilised countries in which the most dismal earnest is still displayed in the infliction of the death-penalty. Not more than half of the death-sentences pronounced are executed (in 1904, the numbers were nineteen out of thirty-three; in 1905, fourteen out of twenty-eight). The same thing occurs, in a much stronger form, in other countries, *e.g.*, in France itself. It is well known that the actual President of the French Republic, a decided opponent of capital punishment, reduced commutation to a system and, in so doing, practically abolished capital punishment in France. But even before his time commutation was very freely resorted to. From a report compiled by Garraud, the French criminologist, it appears that, in the years 1881 to 1889, only 61 out of 269 death-sentences were carried out. The proportion of commutations granted in the years 1881 to 1900 amounted to 65 per cent; in the years 1901 to 1906, it amounted to as much as 91 per cent. The chance that the death-sentence would be executed had therefore become exceedingly remote. Of course, in deciding for execution or mercy in each concrete case, due consideration would be bestowed upon all the details; but even so there can be no doubt that a great measure of subjectivity entered into play and affected each judgment. All sorts of casual influences must have weighed in the decisions. Consequently, in view of the practice in France and elsewhere, Gabriel Tarde was quite right when, less than twenty years ago, he came to the conclusion that the man who really undergoes capital punishment has merely drawn an unlucky number in the lottery, whereas many others would have deserved the same fate, but drew a more fortunate number.

Lastly, I come to the most obvious objection that can be urged against capital punishment: the death-penalty is irreparable. It is curious to see the frivolous manner in which the advocates of capital punishment try to get rid of this objection. Especially interesting is the answer made quite recently by Maître Labori, the famous defender of Dreyfus, when, speaking in favour of capital punishment, he was asked:

“What would you have said if Dreyfus had been shot?”

The answer ran:

“Si Dreyfus avait été fusillé, il nous serait resté le droit de défendre sa mémoire.”

Can a contention of this kind be looked upon as serious for a moment? Certainly Dreyfus's memory could have been rehabilitated, as was done before with that of Jean Calas, the

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victim of human ignorance and intolerance in the eighteenth century. But this would not have restored the life of the man murdered in the name of the law ; the injustice would have been beyond repair. " But is not this the case with every other punishment ? " we shall be asked. A vain objection. True, what has happened can never be entirely undone ; but the damage suffered can be made good to the extent of being reduced to a minimum as regards its consequences. The difference between the heaviest punishment and capital punishment must always, in this respect, remain immeasurable and terrible. It is said that the number of judicial errors is small, even now, and can be reduced, with the most intense care, to a rare exception. I do not deny this and yet I would emphatically remark that recent investigations have brought the possibility of error more clearly to our minds. We have seen it scientifically proved—as personal experience and psychological insight had already taught us—that the evidence of witnesses delivered in all good faith is nevertheless often quite untrustworthy. We have learnt besides that the boundary between mental sanity and abnormal mental conditions is often exceedingly difficult to define, that there will always be a danger lest the man who, after a careful psychiatric investigation, has been pronounced responsible for his actions should nevertheless be a sick man, an unfortunate man and the victim of a mental disturbance that has remained undiscovered or been deemed insufficient. Paraphrasing the words of the poet, we might say, the greater our knowledge, the stronger our conviction of the possibility of erring. But, we shall be told, this possibility can be reduced to a most improbable exception if execution be carried out only in those cases from which every element of doubt is excluded. Excluding every element of doubt : if we make this demand, in how many cases can we allow the execution to proceed ? Are we to insist upon a confession in addition to convincing proofs ? It is obvious that in this way we should be placing a premium upon denial ; and the criminal would be induced to withhold an honest confession that would cost him his life. And yet, in the face of the most eloquent proofs, a denial always gives rise to a certain amount of doubt. This psychological fact was one of the reasons why, in former ages, men attached such importance to a confession that they would leave no stone unturned to obtain it. Either we must exact so great a measure of probability that it is nearly tantamount to a philosophic truth : in that case what becomes of capital punishment and its deterrent effect ? Or else we must be satisfied here also with the evidence that is

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considered sufficient in every other criminal trial ; and then the danger of a mistake remains terribly great. The man who demands capital punishment not only as an exceptional punishment for a few very heinous crimes, in cases where the crime itself is beyond a doubt, where the criminal confesses his offence and where the network of evidence hems him in with perfect certainty ; the man who demands this punishment as the common punishment for homicide and murder : this man must be prepared to bargain for a possible judicial error and to dispose of the execution of an innocent, once described as *une calamité publique*, with a shrug of the shoulders and a “ *Humanum est errare.* ”

“ *La peine de mort est irréparable et la justice humaine est essentiellement faillible.* ”

When a French writer, expressing this in itself undeniable contention, adds the remark, “ *Cet argument est décisif,* ” nothing very valid, so far as I can see, remains to be alleged against it.

I have discussed in the foregoing pages the arguments adduced by the French Government against capital punishment and I have tried to weigh these arguments impartially. I must now examine the question from another point of view and see whether the condition of crime in France at this moment permits of the abolition. We are here in the presence of a question which is indeed most difficult to answer. Let us begin by saying that Soleilland's horrible crime of last year, which led to a reaction against the movement for the abolition, may be entirely disregarded. An isolated case of crime, however terrible, can never have any bearing upon a question like that under consideration ; but, besides, Soleilland's offence was one of such a nature that, in view of the personality of the offender, capital punishment would not have been lightly applied to it. There is no doubt that, even under a different president, the extreme penalty would have been commuted and with absolute good reason. Of much more importance than this and a few other serious crimes in addition, is the fact advanced from various sides that crime, in the form of ruthless acts of violence on life and limb, has increased latterly in France. Even Cruppi, the great supporter of the abolition of capital punishment, speaks of “ *une période inquiétante,* ” of “ *une sorte de crise ou des attentats répétés ont provoqué l'alarme du public.* ” Whatever differences of opinion may prevail as to the value of the statistical figures, one fact appears certain, namely, that the number of convictions for the offence of *meurtre*—*i.e.*, intentional homicide without malice aforethought—has increased considerably in these

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same recent years during which capital punishment has no longer been inflicted. However, homicide, according to Art. 304 C.P., is liable to capital punishment in but a few cases; and it is only in those cases that the question of whether or not this punishment should be inflicted and carried out could have any significance. Of more importance is the alleged increase in the number of cases of *assassinat*—i.e., murder committed “avec préméditation ou guet-apens”—which, according to Arts. 296 and 302 C.P., are liable to capital punishment. Recent years also point to some increase in this crime, but this comparatively slight fluctuation is of no great value or significance. The high figure of 1904–1905 again showed a certain diminution and remained considerably below the maximum figure, which was reached about 1890. Lacassagne, who, in his last work on “*Peine de Mort et Criminalité*,” declares in favour of the retention of capital punishment, admits that “le nombre moyen des assassinats se maintient à peu près le même dans le long intervalle de cinquante années (1855–1903).” French statistics, therefore, do not tend to conclusions that are in any way certain as to the effect of the threat and application of the death-penalty on the progress of serious crime in the country.

Indeed, there is no more difficult problem than whether the threat of capital punishment exercises an at all considerable intimidating influence upon the individual who harbours a plan of crime. Statistics give us nothing at all definite to go upon. The increase and decrease of crime is connected with so many causes that the threat of punishment can be regarded as only one of the factors and probably not the most important. If crime increases after the abolition of the death-penalty, the increase *may* be ascribed to that abolition; but there is no certainty about it. Still less can decrease of crime after the abolition be considered a consequence of it; the only justifiable conclusion to be drawn is that, if there be no increase in serious crime after the abolition, it has then been proved that security of life and limb can be sufficiently ensured even without capital punishment. In order to be able to judge of the intimidating power of capital punishment, we ought to know the psychological process that takes place in the criminal while he lays his scheme and prepares its execution. In this matter we have no trustworthy data; not even the criminal himself would be able to supply them. I would not be positive that capital punishment acts as a deterrent, nor even that, in any given case, the certainty of capital punishment has acted more deterrently than the prospect of any other punishment, although,

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on the other hand, I would venture to maintain the opinion that another criminal is more likely to be restrained by the certainty before him of a possibly long life within the walls of a prison, a confinement of many monotonous years, without the smallest fair chance of recovering his liberty, than by the prospect of the guillotine awaiting him and doing its work in a few seconds. I should think that any individual not acting in the blind heat of passion would be deterred from crime by the certainty of discovery and punishment, if that punishment consists in lifelong imprisonment. Of course, there is a lack of comprehensiveness in the remark made long ago by Beccaria that the certainty of punishment is a greater deterrent than the heaviness of the sentence. Imprisonment for life, however, is a heavy enough sentence to exercise a deterrent influence as such. I look upon the theory of the greater intimidating power of capital punishment as unproved and incapable of proof.

But the possibility exists that the ascertained increase in crimes against the person in France, as I already said, may make the abolition of capital punishment undesirable at the present moment. Exceptional circumstances call for exceptional remedies. Lacassagne, who accepts the deterrent power of capital punishment only when it is frequently and unhesitatingly inflicted, calls, in the event of a continued increase in the number of crimes against human life, for the regular execution of every sentence of death pronounced during the next ten years—in other words, for a great spring-cleaning in the malefactors' world. If, however, the authorities in France were to grasp at this extreme measure, reaction would be sure to follow swiftly. The juries, in the presence of the proposal for the abolition of capital punishment, have taken pleasure in increasing the number of death-sentences considerably: the figures are fifty-four in 1907, as against sixteen in 1904. In fact, they knew that the sentences would be commuted and that they could therefore easily venture upon this sort of protest. Had they been certain that their refusal to allow extenuating circumstances meant a real sentence of death, they would undoubtedly, in the vast majority of cases, have shrunk from the responsibility. The execution of criminals *en masse*, even though this or that writer may plead for it, is too much opposed to current sentiment to be conceived as possible. Those who now call loudest for the scaffold would then utter the most vehement protests. For this reason it is very dangerous in these matters to listen to the so-called voice of the people. I repeat, it is possible that the moment to introduce the abolition is badly chosen in France. In that case they will go no

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further than the maintenance of the present state of affairs. Perhaps President Fallières will show his respect for the law by allowing justice now and again to take its course ; but commutation will remain the rule and, sooner or later, the juries will revert to their former habits of clemency. Out of 180 convictions for murder in 1904, sentence of death was pronounced in sixteen cases. And of these sixteen perhaps one was carried out. The deterrent effect of capital punishment can be but extremely slight in the face of this practice. And any other practice will soon appear to be impossible. That is why the appeal to the unfavourable conditions of crime in late years does not seem to me to be of great, or, at least, decisive, importance.

A serious objection urged against the abolition of capital punishment in France is that the existing penal code does not include a good form of punishment fitted to take the place of the death-penalty. In the opinion of many people, penal servitude, practised in the form of transportation or deportation to a new colony, has proved a failure ; the punishment is deficient in deterrent effect and involves too much danger of escape. It is next observed that the prison-system in the mother-country is not so arranged that the punishment destined to replace capital punishment could be carried out in the existing penal establishments. I should be travelling too far afield were I to examine the correctness of these contentions ; indeed, the advocates of the abolition have admitted their correctness and sought for a differently managed and applied form of punishment. The government offered to replace the death-penalty by imprisonment for life, with the condition that the first six years should be spent in solitary confinement, and the remainder in a house of correction specially appointed for this purpose. If the convict were to commit a fresh crime during his detention, he would be sentenced to solitary confinement for life. The committee of the Chamber of Deputies, which had at first declared in favour of abolishing the death-penalty, rejected the first period of six years' solitary confinement and selected for the whole duration of the punishment the so-called Auburn, or silent, system, which consists in labour performed in common by day, under conditions of compulsory silence, and isolation by night. It is worth mentioning that a later report of the committee, in which the retention of the death-penalty is proposed, at the same time contains the suggestion for a new punishment threatening solitary confinement for life. I will refrain from criticising the different systems here and restrict myself to declaring that I, personally, am most

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attracted by the original proposal of the Government, which corresponds pretty closely with that which has been law in our country since 1886. In Holland, the sentence of imprisonment for life is served in a special house of correction, built for convicts sentenced to more than five years' imprisonment. The first five years are spent in solitary confinement, the remaining period in collective company. Convicts sentenced to imprisonment for life are kept in a separate part of the building. This arrangement has been found to present no serious difficulties. When our new legislation was introduced, it was considered necessary to admit corporal punishment as a means of correction for convicts sentenced to imprisonment for life. So far there has been no need to resort to this means of correction. Of course, allowance must be made for the fact that with us the number of prisoners for life is only very small.

As I set down these arguments, the decision of the French Chamber is announced. The Deputies have declared by a majority of over a hundred votes in favour of the retention of capital punishment. In so doing, they have given it as their opinion that circumstances in France do not allow of abolition, that French society is not yet ripe for the measure. The foreigner must needs respect this decision, however much he may regret it, and this principally for France's own sake. It bears unfavourable witness to the condition of the country. For I do not hesitate to express this conclusion and to submit it, in all deference, to the lawyers and law-givers of England : a civilised country, in which the social and economic conditions and relations are properly ordered, in which the administration of the criminal law is duly fixed and the prison-system decently managed, in which the police is equal to its task and co-operates satisfactorily with the law, a land such as this should be able and is able to dispense with capital punishment. The declaration that this is not the case in France can only mean that conditions in France are not what they ought to be at the beginning of the twentieth century. And the legislator who feels justified in retaining the death-penalty lays himself under the solemn obligation of rendering its abolition possible at the earliest moment.

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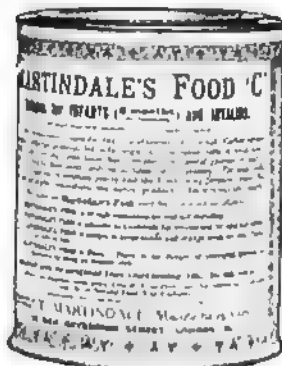
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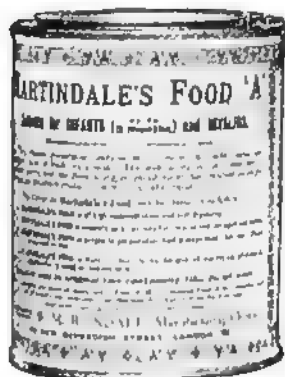
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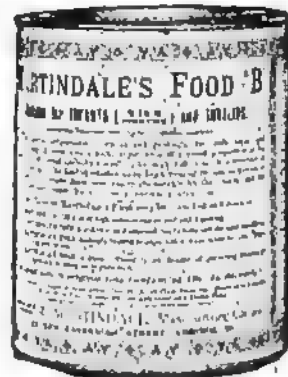
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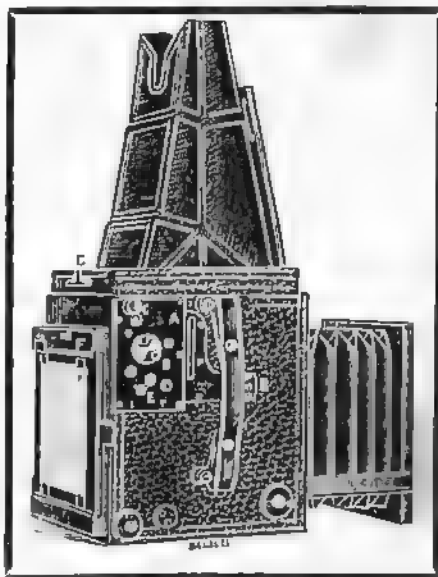
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